THOMAS JEFFERSON AND THE FIRST MONUMENT OF THE CLASSICAL REVIVAL IN AMERICA

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Michigan

By FISKE KIMBALL, A.B., M. ARCH.

REPRINTED FROM THE JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS.

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NOTE OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

To the heirs of the late Thomas Jefferson Coolidge, Jr., and to his executor, Mr. Francis R. Hart, I am indebted for their generous permission to study and publish the Capitol drawings in the Coolidge collection. The authorities of the Library of Congress, the Virginia State Library, and the Massachusetts Historical Society have placed me under obligation by courteously facilitating the examination of their material. I also owe a general acknowledgment to Mr. Worthington C. Ford, through whom I learned the whereabouts of the Jefferson drawings, to Messrs. Louis Holmes Boynton, Francis W. Kelsey, and Ulrich B. Phillips of the University of Michigan and Mr. A. D. F. Hamlin of Columbia University, whose criticism has given me the benefit of their special knowledge of varied fields. Messrs. Noland and Baskerville of Richmond, Mr. James Dudley Morgan of Washington, Mr. John W. Jordan of Philadelphia, Mr. A. S. Salley of Columbia, South Carolina, as well as Mr. Arthur Lyon Cross of the University of Michigan, have kindly informed me on individual points or assisted in securing material. Finally, I must express how much this study owes to my father, Mr. Edwin F. Kimball, of Boston, whose continued gifts for travel and for the collection of documents constitute a rich endowment of research in the history of American architecture.

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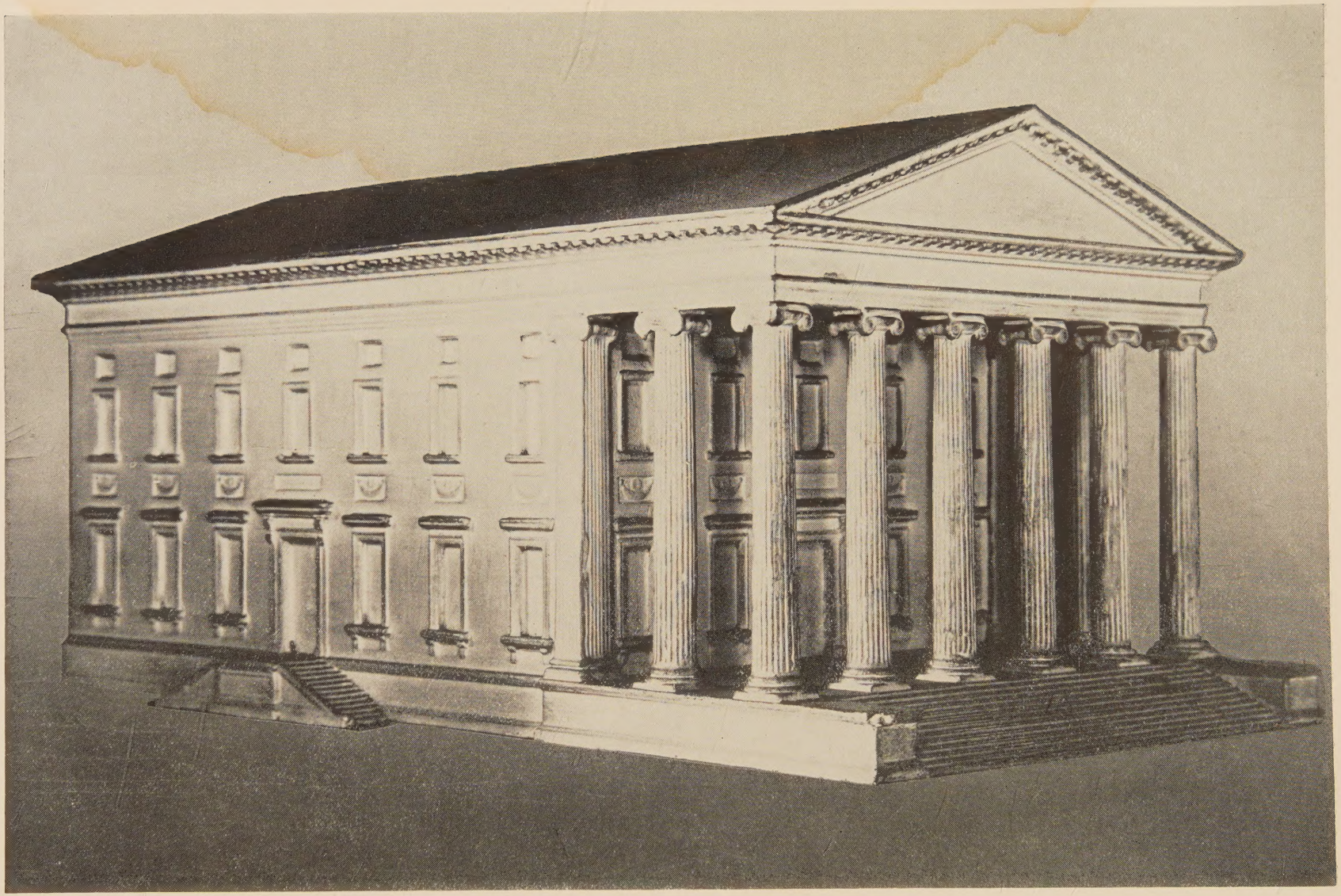

Fig. 9. Original Model of the Virginia State Capitol

Thomas Jefferson and the First Monument of the Classical Revival in America

THERE can be little doubt that the first monument of the classical revival in America is the Capitol of Virginia, at Richmond. Conceived in 1785, in conscious imitation of the Maison Carrée, it was essentially complete in 1789, when the next work in the Roman manner, Bulfinch's triumphal column on Beacon Hill, in Boston, was erected. Easy to verify as is this priority, it has been little recognized, and the building itself and the question of its authorship still await scientific study. Though it is well known that Thomas Jefferson and the French architect, Clérisseau, each had a share in its design, the exact nature and relative extent of their services remain to be defined. Unpublished material now brought to light, in connection with published documents which this material will place in clearer perspective, will be found to establish, beyond much dispute, the real designer of this building, and thus the pioneer of our classical revival in architecture. The reactions and methods of an architect at the critical moment between the academic and the Romanist supremacies appear with rare distinctness in these papers. Further documents and drawings, many of them likewise unpublished, permit the original form of the building itself to be reëstablished, and give other important evidences concerning early American architects and architecture.

The writers who have treated the subject have failed to give the full and exact study, both of contemporary documents and of the executed fabric, which the epochal character of the design requires. Concerning the authorship and circumstances of the original design there are two brief special studies, that of Colonel Sherwin McRae, of the Virginia State Library, published in the *Old Dominion Magazine*, July 15, 1871,[1] and that of Alice M. Tyler, which appeared in the Richmond *Times-Dispatch* for July 7, 1912.[2] The authors rehearse Jefferson's published statements in regard to the building, and accept them as establishing his influence in the selection of a model and in the final adoption of a design based on it, but are prevented by lack of material from assigning the credit for this design in its final form. The same

[1] Virginia State Capitol—An Historical Account of the Erection of the Capitol, and a Review of the Question of its Preservation. Separately reprinted. 8 pp.

[2] The Capitol Square a Century Ago and the Capitol Square Today. Illustrated.

is true of the early account of Jefferson's architectural work by James Kevan Peebles.[1] Other writers, who have treated his architectural activity as a whole,[2] make but passing mention of the building, or none at all, feeling perhaps that Jefferson's share in its design must necessarily have been secondary to that of Clérisseau. This was the outspoken opinion of the late Montgomery Schuyler, who voiced the current skepticism of many practising architects when he said, in an incidental reference,[3] "Jefferson is erroneously reputed to be the author . . . his own account overthrows the attribution," and again,[4] "the architect was, in fact, a Frenchman." With only the evidence adduced by these writers, the question would indeed be insoluble, and opinions on it would necessarily remain *a priori*.

Until now, to be sure, it may well have seemed less probable, *a priori*, that Jefferson was the architect than that Clérisseau should have been. Clérisseau was a former pensioner of the Academy at Rome, who had spent nineteen years in drawing the remains of ancient architecture,—a friend of Winckelmann, and teacher of Robert Adam and the Freiherr von Erdmannsdorf,—leaders in the classical revivals of England and Germany. When the Empress Catherine II of Russia requested of the French Academy a man fitted to realize her project of a palace like those of the Roman emperors, it was Clérisseau who was designated. Though he belonged to the Academy of Painting and Sculpture as "*peintre d'architecture*," and though his only executed architectural works are decorations of interiors, there can be no question of his architectural knowledge and skill.[1] With Jefferson, on the other hand, the prevailing belief has been until recently that a man of his political activity could not have been the actual designer of buildings demanding trained knowledge and technical skill. It is hoped that this presumption has been removed, however, by the demonstration that Jefferson was, in fact, already an accomplished designer long before the Capitol was undertaken.[2]

Of documentary material concerning the genesis and character of the original design there are, first, passages in Jefferson's collected writings, already utilized in the previous studies. There is also a wealth of manuscript documents of which these studies have given no hint. The Library of Congress possesses a number of letters, especially those between Jefferson and the Virginia Commissioners of Public Buildings, which throw unexpected light on Jefferson's share in the authorship of the Capitol and on the circumstances of its building. The Virginia State Library has his accounts with the state accompanied by important letters and vouchers, as well as the original plaster model of the building, made in France by Jefferson's order. Surpassing all these in importance are the original studies for the Capitol, preserved, with the main bulk of Jefferson's architectural drawings, among the papers of the late T. Jefferson Coolidge, Jr., in Boston. The authenticity of these as papers which belonged to Jefferson is beyond question. The collection was already seen before 1834, by William Dunlap, the historian of early American art,[3] and it has never left the hands of Jefferson's descendants. The authorship of the Capitol sketches

[1] Alumni Bulletin of the University of Virginia, Vol. 1, pp. 68–74, reprinted in the *American Architect*, 1895, Vol. xlvii, pp. 28–30.

[2] W. A. Lambeth and W. H. Manning: Thomas Jefferson as an Architect and Designer of Landscapes. 1913. Mildred Stapley: Thomas Jefferson the Architect. *Architectural Record*, 1911, Vol. 29, pp. 177–185. N. M. Isham: Jefferson's Place in Our Architectural History, Journal of the American Institute of Architects, May, 1914, Vol. 2, pp. 230–235.

[3] The Old Greek Revival, *American Architect*, Vol. 98, p. 125.

[4] Same, Vol. 99, p. 84. Cf. also his History of Old Colonial Architecture, *Architectural Record*, Vol. 4, p. 348.

[1] Notice and Bibliography of Clérisseau, by F. Noack, in Thieme-Becker: *Kunstler-Lexicon*. Cf. article in *Grande Encyclopédie*.

[2] Fiske Kimball: Thomas Jefferson as Architect: Monticello and Shadwell. *Architectural Quarterly of Harvard University*. June, 1914. Cf. *The Nation*: March 4, 1915, p. 259.

[3] History of the Origin and Progress of the Arts of Design in America, 1834, Vol. 2, p. 225.

is established by correspondences of material and technique with other drawings which form part of the integral series, unmistakably by a single hand, dating from 1770 to Jefferson's death in 1826. These drawings have always been affirmed by his descendants to have been his own, and some bear notes to that effect by members of his household. The papers on which they are drawn are shown by their watermarks to be identical with those of Jefferson's correspondence. From the variety of circumstances under which they were produced, as well as from their absolute dependence on marginal calculations in Jefferson's hand, they can have been made only by the man himself.

For the form of the building as originally completed, the lack of any detailed description, based on a thorough structural examination of the Capitol as it stood until recent years, is the more unfortunate because the recent remodeling has greatly impaired the historical testimony offered by the building itself. Although there was an attempt to preserve the original arrangement and spirit, and even to return toward Jefferson's antique model, from which the original builders had departed, radical changes were made in the interior, and the archæological authenticity of all the forms was rendered uncertain. It thus becomes more than usually necessary to study the transformations which the building has undergone, and the documentary evidences concerning its original form. Here the principal sources of our knowledge are early descriptions and drawings, the vouchers for the original construction, measured drawings and photographs made before the remodeling, the official report on the remodeling itself,[1] and the oral testimony of the architects in charge of it.

In this first appraisal of the new materials, the necessity for detailed criticism of the evidence precludes a simple chronological narrative. The method imposed requires consideration of documents and groups of documents individually before the responsibility for the design can be distributed, or the relation of the building to it can be established. The conclusions reached make possible, finally, a re-study of conditions at the time the Capitol was built, and of its influence on American architecture.

[1] Senate Document No. III. Appendix to Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Session of 1906.

I. The First Proposals for the Public Buildings

The germ of the Virginia Capitol at Richmond is contained in Jefferson's draft of a bill to remove the seat of government from Williamsburg, presented to the House of Delegates on October 14, 1776. As the first proposal in any of the independent American states to make adequate provisions for the new form of government, its terms are of more than immediate interest. It provides

"that six whole squares of ground surrounded each of them by four streets . . . shall be appropriated to the use and purpose of public buildings. On one of sd squares shall be erected one house for the use of the General Assembly, to be called the Capitol, which sd Capitol shall contain two apartments for the use of the Senate & their clerk, two others for the use of the house of delegates and their clerk, and others for the purposes of Conferences, Committees, & a Lobby, of such forms & dimensions as shall be adapted to their respective purposes. On one other of the sd squares shall be erected another building to be called the Halls of justice . . . and on the same square last mentioned shall be built a public jail . . . One other of the sd squares shall be reserved for the purpose of building thereon hereafter a house for the several executive boards and offices to be held in. Two others with the intervening street shall be reserved for the use of the governor of this commonwealth for the time being to be built on hereafter. And the remaining square shall be appropriated to the use of a public market. The said houses shall be built in a handsome manner with walls of brick, or stone & Porticos where the same may be convenient or ornamental, and with pillars and pavements of stone."

For the selection of grounds, the choice of plans and building materials, five per-

sons to be called the directors of the public buildings were to be appointed by the assembly.

Although the bill failed of passage in 1776, another bill following its wording was introduced by Harvey in 1779 and passed, making Richmond the Capitol after the last day of April, 1780.[1] In an act for locating the public squares on Shockoe Hill, passed in the first session of the assembly held at Richmond, the directors are named, beginning with his excellency Thomas Jefferson, then Governor of the Commonwealth.[2] The importance of Jefferson's proposals from the architectural standpoint lies in the provision of separate buildings for the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of the government, the executive building being for the several executive boards and offices, and distinct from the Governor's residence. Such a strict division was hitherto unknown in America, and indeed in Europe. European governments generally were not organized in such a way as to permit this separation; they occupied for the most part remodeled palaces not specifically designed for their functions.[3] The colonial capitols or state houses had contained all three branches of their governments, and this arrangement was continued when the states became independent. In Virginia the superior court of the colony consisted merely of the Governor and council, and held its sessions in the capitol.[4] The old court-house at Williamsburg, still standing, was used only by the town and the county;[5] the Governor's palace, of course, did not correspond to the executive building which Jefferson proposed. Under the state government, although an independent judiciary was organized, its courts still sat in the capitol, while they remained at Williamsburg.[1] Jefferson's scheme, as enacted, would have produced not merely a monumental grouping new to America, but individual buildings of a novel character, anticipating in type the great independent parliament buildings and *palais de justice* of modern Europe.

The plan was beyond the ideas and resources of the time. No sooner was Jefferson out of the country, on his mission to France, than the law was modified. An act passed at the session of October, 1784, provided that,

"Whereas it hath been represented to the general assembly, by the directors of the public buildings that apartments can be provided for the use of the legislative, executive, and judiciary, to greater advantage and with less expense, by uniting them under one roof, than by erecting separate houses . . . that it shall be in the discretion of the said directors to cause apartments to be provided for the uses aforesaid under one and the same roof; any law to the contrary notwithstanding."[2]

The proposal for independent buildings was thus stillborn, and the colonial precedent, still closely followed in America, was perpetuated.

II. The Original Design of the Capitol

A. Written Documents Concerning the Design.

The familiar account of Jefferson's later connection with the building of the Virginia Capitol is the one given in his Memoir, set down in 1821:

"I was written to in 1785 (being then in Paris) by directors appointed to superintend the building of a Capitol at Richmond, to advise them as to a plan, and to add to it one of a Prison. Thinking it a favorable opportunity of introducing into the State an example of architecture in the classic style of antiquity, and the Maison quarrée of Nismes, an ancient Roman temple, being considered as the most perfect model existing of what may be called cubic architecture, I applied to M. Clerissault, who had published drawings of the Antiquities of Nismes, to have me a model of the building made in stucco, only changing the order from Corinthian to Ionic, on

[1] Senate Document No. III, p. 106, note. The act is published in W. W. Hening: The Statutes at Large, Vol. 10, 1822, p. 85 ff.

[2] Hening, Vol. 10, p. 318.

[3] Cf., for instance, P. Klopfer: Von Palladio bis Schinkel, 1911, pp. 94–100. Justiz und Verwaltungsbau.

[4] F. H. McGuire, in Report of the Virginia State Bar Association, 1895, p. 98.

[5] L. G. Tyler: Williamsburg, The Old Colonial Capitol, 1907, p. 240.

[1] Hening, Vol. 9, p. 434, 557; Vol. 10, p. 99.

[2] Hening, Vol. 11, p. 496.

account of the difficulty of the Corinthian capitals. I yielded, with reluctance, to the taste of Clerissault, in his preference of the modern capital of Scamozzi to the more noble capital of antiquity. This was executed by the artist whom Choiseul Gouffier had carried with him to Constantinople, and employed, while ambassador there, in making those beautiful models of the remains of Grecian architecture which are to be seen at Paris. To adapt the exterior to our use, I drew a plan of the interior, with the apartments necessary for legislative, executive and judiciary purposes; and accommodated in their size and distribution to the form and dimensions of the building. These were forwarded to the directors, in 1786, and were carried into execution, with some variations, not for the better, the most important of which, however, admit of future correction."[1]

Among the letters which Jefferson wrote, urging delay until the plans should arrive from abroad, are several passages of which the tenor might be expected to give a hint on his own part in their preparation. They have the advantage over the memoir in having been written at the time the events occurred. On September 1, 1785, Jefferson says, in a letter to Madison:

"I have received an application from the Directors of public buildings to procure them a plan for their capitol. I shall send them a plan taken from the best morsel of ancient architecture now remaining. It has obtained the approbation of fifteen or sixteen centuries, and is, therefore, preferable to any design which might be newly contrived. It will give more room, be more convenient and cost less than the plan they sent me. Pray encourage them to wait for it and execute it. It will be superior in beauty to anything in America, and not inferior to anything in the world."[2]

On September 20, he wrote to Madison again:

" . . . I received this summer a letter from messrs. Buchanan and Hay, as Directors of the public buildings, desiring that I would have drawn for them plans of sundry public buildings, and, in the first place, of a capitol. They fixed, for their receiving this plan, a day which was within about six weeks of that on which their letter came to my hand. I engaged an architect of capital abilities in this business. Much time was requisite, after the external form was agreed on, to make the internal distribution convenient for the three branches of government. This time was much lengthened by my avocations to other objects, which I had no right to neglect. The plan, however, was settled. The gentlemen had sent me the one which they had thought of. The one agreed on here, is more convenient, more beautiful, gives more room, and will not cost more than two-thirds what that would.

"We took for our model what is called the Maison quarrée of Nismes, one of the most beautiful, if not the most beautiful and precious morsel of architecture left us by antiquity. It was built by Caius and Lucius Caesar, and repaired by Louis XV, and has the suffrage of all the judges of architecture who have seen it as yielding to no one of the beautiful monuments of Greece, Rome, Palmyra and Balbec, which late travelers have communicated to us. It is very simple, but is noble beyond expression, and would have done honor to any country, as presenting to travelers a specimen of taste in our infancy, promising much for our maturer age.

"I have been much mortified with information I received two days ago from Virginia that the first brick of the Capitol would be laid within a few days. But surely the delay of this piece of a summer would have been repaired by the savings in the plan preparing here, were we to value its other superiorities as nothing. But how is taste in this beautiful art to be formed in our countrymen unless we avail ourselves of every occasion when public buildings are to be erected, of presenting to them models for their study and imitation? Pray try if you can affect the stopping of this work. I have written also to E. R.[1] on this subject. The loss will be only of the laying of the bricks already laid, or a part of them. The bricks themselves will do again for the interior walls, and one side wall and one end wall may remain, as they will answer equally well for our plan. This loss is not to be weighed against the saving of money which will arise, against the comfort of laying out the public money for something honorable, the satisfaction of seeing an object and proof of national good taste, and the regret and mortification of erecting a monument to our barbarism, which will be loathed with execrations as long as it shall endure. The plans are in good forwardness, and I hope will be ready within three of four weeks. They could not be stopped now, but on paying their whole price, which will be considerable. If the undertakers are afraid to undo what they have done encourage them to do it by a recommendation of the Assembly.

"You see I am an enthusiast in the subject of the arts. But it is an enthusiasm of which I am not ashamed, as its object is to improve the taste of my countrymen, to increase their reputation, to recon-

[1] The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, edited by A. A. Lipscomb and A. E. Bergh, 1903, Vol. 1, p. 70.

[2] Bergh, Vol. 5, p. 107.

[1] Edmund Randolph.

cile to them the respect of the world, and procure them its praise."[1]

The letter of the same date of Edmund Randolph contains a similar passage, with some omissions and slight changes of wording. In all of these statements, it will be seen, Jefferson says nothing unequivocal of any personal responsibility for the design, but writes, "I engaged an architect of capital abilities in this business," and emphasizes the merit of the model selected.

One other published document bears on the question of authorship—the "Account of the Capitol of Virginia" published among Jefferson's miscellaneous papers. As numerous references to it will be necessary, it may be reprinted here in full:

"The Capitol in the city of Richmond in Virginia is on the model of the temples of Erectheus at Athens, of Balbec and of the Maison quarrée of Nismes, all of which are nearly of the same form and proportions, and are considered as the most perfect examples of Cubic architecture as the Pantheon of Rome is of the Spherical. Their dimensions not being sufficient for the purposes of the Capitol, they were enlarged, but their proportions rigorously preserved. The Capitol is of brick, one hundred and thirty-four feet long, seventy feet wide, and forty-five feet high, exclusive of the basement. Twenty-eight feet of its length is occupied by a portico of the whole breadth of the house, shewing six columns in front, and two inter-colonnations in flank. It is of a single order, which is Ionic; its columns four feet two inches diameter, and the entablature running round the whole building. The Portico is crowned by a Pediment, the height of which is two-ninths of its span.

"Within the body of the building, which is one hundred and six feet long, are two tiers of rooms twenty-one feet high each. In the lower, at one end, is the room in which the Supreme Court sits, thirty by sixty-four feet, with a vestibule fourteen feet by twenty-two feet, and an office for their clerk, fourteen feet by thirteen feet. In the other end is the room for the House of Delegates, thirty feet by sixty-four feet, with a lobby fourteen feet by thirty-six feet. In the middle is a room thirty-six feet square, of the whole height of the building, and receiving its light from above. In the center of this room is a marble statue of General Washington, made at Paris by Houdon, who came over to Virginia for the express purpose of taking his form . . . A peristyle of columns in the same room, six feet from the wall, and twenty-two and a half feet high with their entablature, support a corridor above, serving as a communication for all the upper apartments, the stairs landing in it. In the upper tier is a Senate chamber thirty feet square, an office for their clerk, five rooms for committees and juries, an office for the clerk of the House of Delegates, a chamber for the Governor and Council, and a room for their clerk. In the basement of the building are the Land office, Auditor's office and Treasury.

"The drawings of the façade and other elevations were done by Clerissault, one of the most correct Architects of France, and author of the Antiquities of Nismes, among which was the Maison quarée. The model in stucco was made under his direction, by an Artist who had been employed many years in Greece, by the Count de Choiseul, ambassador of France at Constantinople, in making models of the most celebrated remains of ancient architecture in that country."[1]

The purpose and circumstances of composition of this document, which would determine the weight to be accorded its statements, have been hitherto unknown. These points are cleared up, however, and fresh light is thrown on the main question by an exchange of letters, preserved in manuscript, between Jefferson and G. Douglas, a bookseller and publisher, of Petersburg, Virginia. On October 15, 1800, Douglas, writing Jefferson concerning a proposed republication of Douglas' "Register" for 1800, says:

" . . . to render it more acceptable to the people of Virginia, I propose to have a frontispiece to it representing a view of the Capitol in Richmond, the plate of which is now actually engraved in Philadelphia. . . .

"When in Richmond for the purpose of having the drawing taken, I endeavour'd, but in vain, to find some person who could give me an account of the building—the intention of this letter, therefore, is to request (having been informed, that you, Sir, were the original & principal mover in having the building undertaken and executed) that you will have the goodness to give me a short account of it—such as, from what original the design is taken, from Greece or Italy, of what order, the drawer or builder's names, when the work was commenced and when finished, & the expence, with some account of the inside apartments, &c. . . ."[2]

[1] Bergh, Vol. 5, p. 134 ff.

[1] Bergh, Vol. 17, p. 353 ff.

[2] Library of Congress, Jefferson Papers. 2d Series, Vol. 27.

Jefferson replied from Washington, December 21, 1800:

"Your letter of Oct. 15 came to my hands on the 3d of November when I was so engaged in preparations and arrangements for my departure to this place that I was only able to put up some notes on the subject of the Capitol that I had made when I gave the plan of it to Monr. Clerissault. these have enabled me to make out the enclosed account of it. whether the execution conformed to the original plan I do not know. still less can I say anything of the expence: but that I presume might be obtained from Mr. William Hay who was one of the Directors and principally attended to it."[1]

The description enclosed is substantially identical with the published version, differing only in a few minor points of phrasing. The importance of Jefferson's accompanying letter lies partly in its explanation that the account applies to the original plan and not necessarily to the building as executed, but especially in its statement that the account was compiled from notes made when the plan was given to Clérisseau. If so, the fullness of the description and dimensions would suggest that the design had already been carried to an advanced state by Jefferson himself.

Superior to all these letters in interest is the unpublished series between Jefferson and the Directors of Public Buildings of Virginia. It is given at length, with omission only of the parts referring to the proposed prison, which are reserved for subsequent treatment elsewhere.

The correspondence may be prefaced by a letter to Jefferson from William Short, afterward Jefferson's secretary in Paris, and a sharer of his interest in architecture:

Richmond, July 28th, 1784.

Dear Sir

. . . . . .

The Assembly voted at the last session the Sale of the public Property here— in Order to begin the Buildings on the Hill— The Directors have contracted with an Undertaker— & Roy Randolph is to draw the Plan— I wished them very much to send to some Part of Italy for a Design & Workmen — A good model I think would be a very great public Utility—& the Example of importing Workmen, would unquestionably be followed—& be attended with very good Consequences — But I do not think the Directors believe it is possible to build a more magnificent House than the Wmsburg Capitol— It seems impossible to extend their Ideas of Architecture beyond it —

. . . . . .

Yours &c.
W. Short.[1]

Though Short thus appears as the original proponent of a design from abroad, his fears concerning the Directors were not realized, as we see from their own first letter to Jefferson:

Richmond March 20th—1785.

Sir

The active part which you took before your departure from Virginia, as a director of the public buildings, leads us to believe, that it will not be now unacceptable to you, to co-operate with us, as far as your engagements will permit.

We foresee, that in the execution of our commission, the Commonwealth must sustain a heavy expense, and that we can provide no shield so effectual against the censures which await large disbursements of public money, as the propriety of making them. For this purpose we must intreat you to consult an able Architect on a plan fit for a Capitol, and to assist him with the information of which you are possessed.

You will recollect, Sir, that the first Act directed seperate houses for the accommodation of the different departments of government. But fearing, that the Assembly would not countenance us in giving sufficient magnificence to distinct buildings, we obtained leave to consolidate the whole under one roof, if it should seem adviseable. The inclosed draught will show that we wish to avail ourselves of this licence, But, altho' it contains many particulars, it is not intended to confine the Architect except as to the number and area of the rooms.

We have not laid down the ground, it being fully in your power to describe it, when we inform you that the Hill on which Gunns yellow house stands, and which you favoured as the best situation, continues to be prefered by us: and that we have located 29 half acre lots including Marsdens tenement, and Minzies' lots in front of Gunns; The Legislature have not limited us to any sum, nor can we, as yet at least, resolve to limit ourselves to a precise amount. But we wish to unite economy with elegance and dignity — at present the only funds submitted to our order are nearly about £10,000 Virga. Currency.

[1] Jefferson Papers. 1st Series, Vol. 7.

[1] L. C., Jefferson Papers, 2d Series, Vol. 75, No. 8.

We have already contracted with Edward Voss of Culpepper, for the laying of 1500 thousand Bricks. He is a workman of the first reputation here, but skilful in plain and rubbed work alone. We suppose he may commence his undertaking by the beginning of August, ... This circumstance renders us anxious for expedition in fixing the plan: especially too as the foundation of the Capitol will silence the enemies of Richmond in the next October session.

. . . . . .

We shall send to Europe for any Stone which may be wanted.

The roof will be covered with lead, as we conceive that to be better than Copper or tiles.

In the remarks, which accompany the plan, we have requested a draught for the Governor's house and prison. But we hope that the Capitol will be first drawn and forwarded to us, as there is no hurry for the other buildings.

We trust Sir, you will excuse the trouble which we now impose on you, and will ascribe it to our belief of your Alacrity to serve your country on this occasion. Etc. etc.,

James Buchanan
Wm. Hay on Behalf of the Directors[1]

Jefferson's immediate reply is lost to us, but subsequent letters permit us to recover its contents, and to follow the later proceedings:

Paris Aug. 13, 1785

Gentlemen

Your favor of March 20. came to hand the 14th of June, and the next day I wrote to you acknowledging the receipt, and apprising you that between that date and the 1st of August it would be impossible to procure & get to your hands the draughts you desired. I did hope indeed to have had them prepared before this, but it will yet be some time before they will be in readiness. I flatter myself however they will give you satisfaction when you receive them and that you will think the object will not have lost by the delay. I was a considerable time before I could find an architect whose taste had been formed on a study of the ancient models of this art: the style of architecture in this capital being far from chaste. I at length heard of one, to whom I immediately addressed myself, and who perfectly fulfills my wishes. he has studied 20 years in Rome, and has given proofs of his skill & taste by a publication of some antiquities of this country. you intimate that you should be willing to have a workman sent to you to superintend the execution of this work, were I to send one on this errand from hence, he would consider himself as the Superintendent of the Directors themselves & probably of the Government of the state also. I will give you my ideas on this subject. the columns of the building & the external architraves of the doors & windows should be of stone. whether these are made here, or there, you will need one good stone-cutter, & one will be enough because, under his direction, negroes who never saw a tool, will be able to prepare the work for him to finish. I will therefore send you such a one, in time to begin work in the spring. all the internal cornices & other ornaments not exposed to the weather will be much handsomer, cheaper & more durable in plaister than in wood. I will therefore employ a good workman in this way & send him to you. but he will have no employment till the house is covered, of course he need not be sent till next summer. I will take him on wages so long beforehand as that he may draw all the ornaments in detail, under the eye of the architect, which he will have to execute when he comes to you. it will be the cheapest way of getting them drawn & the most certain of putting him in possession of his precise duty. plaister will not answer for your external cornice, & stone will be too dear. you will probably find yourselves obliged to be contented with wood. for this therefore, & for your window sashes, doors, forms, wainscoating &c you will need a capital housejoiner, & a capital one he ought to be, capable of directing all the circumstances in the construction of the walls which the execution of the plans will require. such a workman cannot be got here. nothing can be worse done than the house-joinery of Paris. besides that his speaking the language perfectly would be essential. I think this character must be got from England. there are no workmen in wood in Europe comparable to those of England. I submit to you therefore the following proposition: to wit, I will get a correspondent in England to engage a workman of this kind. I will direct him to come here, which will cost five guineas. we will make proof of his execution. he shall also make himself, under the eye of the architect, all the drawings for the building which he is to execute himself—and if we find him sober & capable, he shall be forwarded to you. I expect that in the article of the drawings and the cheapness of passage from France you will save the expense of his coming here. but as to this workman I shall do nothing unless I receive your commands. with respect to your stone work, it may be got much cheaper here than in England. the stone of Paris is very white & beautiful, but it always remains soft, & suffers from the weather. the cliffs of the Seine from hence to Havre are all of stone. I am not yet informed whether it is all liable to the same objections, at Lyons & all along the Rhone is a stone as beautiful as that of Paris, soft

[1] L. C., Jefferson Papers, 2d Series, Vol. 4, No. 28.

when it comes out of the quarry, but very soon becoming hard in the open air, & very durable. I doubt however whether the commerce between Virginia & Marseilles would afford opportunities of conveiance sufficient. it remains to be enquired what addition to the original cost would be made by the short land carriage from Lyons to the Loire & the water transportation down that to Bordeaux & also whether a stone of the same quality may not be found on the Loire, in this and all other matters relative to your charge you may command my services freely.

will you have any occasion for slate? it may be got very good & ready prepared at Havre, & a workman or more might be sent on easy terms. perhaps the quarry at Tuckahoe would leave you no other want than a workman.

I shall be glad to receive your sentiments on the several matters herein mentioned, that I may know how far you approve of them, as I shall with pleasure pursue strictly whatever you desire. I have the honour to be with great respect & esteem, gentlemen

Your most obedient
& most humble servant
TH: JEFFERSON.[1]

Richmond October 18th 1785

Sir

Your favour of the 15th June came duely to hand, and we return you our warmest acknowledgements for undertaking in so obliging manner to aid the Directors of the public buildings in procuring plans and estimates.

Your ideas upon the subject are perfectly corresponding to those of the Directors, respecting the stile and Ornaments proper for such a work, and we trust the plans will be designed in conformity thereto . . . We are sorry we did not sollicit your Aid in the business at an earlier day, for, from the anxiety of the Public to have the work begun, we have been obliged to carry it on so far, that we may be embarrassed when we are favoured with a more perfect plan from you. As we expect to hear from you, and perhaps receive the plans before this can reach you, we deem it proper to inform you what has been done, that you may judge, how far we shall be able to adopt the plan, you transmit us—The foundation of the Capitol is laid, of the following demensions, 148 by 118 feet, in which are about 400 M bricks; the Center of the building of 75 by 35 to be lighted from above, is designed for the Delegates; the rest is divided in such a manner as to answer every purpose directed by the Assembly; the foundation of the four porticos are not laid, tho' the end and side walls are contrived to receive them. The present plan differs from the one transmitted you, only in the arrangement, and we hope we shall be able to avail ourselves of your assistance without incurring much expence.

JAMES BUCHANAN.[1]
WM HAY.

[1] L. C., Jefferson Papers, 1st Series, Vol. 1, No. 155.

Paris Jan. 26—1786

Gentlemen

I had the honour of writing to you on the receipt of your orders to procure draughts for the public buildings, and again on the 13th of August. in the execution of those orders two methods of proceeding presented themselves to my mind. the one was to leave to some architect to draw an external according to his fancy, in which way experience shows that about once in a thousand times a pleasing form is hit upon; the other was to take some model already devised and approved by the general suffrage of the world. I had no hesitation in deciding that the latter was best, nor after the decision was there any doubt what model to take. there is at Nismes in the South of France a building, called the Maison quarree, erected in the time of the Caesars, and which is allowed without contradiction to be the most perfect and precious remain of antiquity in existence. it's superiority over anything at Rome, in Greece, at Balbec or Palmyra is allowed on all hands; and this single object has placed Nismes in the general tour of travellers. having not yet had leisure to visit it, I could only judge of it from drawings, and from the relation of numbers who had been to see it. I determined therefore to adopt this model, & to have all it's proportions justly drewed. as it was impossible for a foreign artist to know what number & sizes of apartments could suit the different corps of our government, nor how they should be connected with one another, I undertook to form that arrangement, & this being done. I committed them to an Architect (Monsieur Clerisseau) who has studied this art 20 years in Rome, who had particularly studied and measured the Maison quarree of Nismes, and had published a book containing 4 most excellent plans, descriptions, & observations on it. he was too well acquainted with the merit of that building to find himself restrained by my injunctions not to depart from his model. in one instance only he persuaded me to admit of this. that was to make the Portico two columns deep only, instead of three as the original is. his reason was that this latter depth would too much darken the apartments. oeconomy might be added as a second reason. I consented to it to satisfy him, and the plans are so drawn. I knew that it would still be easy to execute the building with a depth of three columns, and it is what I would certainly recommend. we know that the maison quarree has pleased universally for near 2000 years. by leaving out a column, the propor-

[1] L. C., Jefferson Papers, 2d Series, Vol. 4, No. 28a.

tions will be changed and perhaps the effect may be injured more than is expected. what is good is often spoiled by trying to make it better

The present is the first opportunity which has occurred of sending the plans. you will accordingly receive herewith the ground plan, the elevation of the front, and the elevation of the side. the architect having been much busied, and knowing that this was all which would be necessary in the beginning, has not yet finished the Sections of the building. they must go by some future occasion as well as the models of the front and side which are making in plaister of Paris. these were absolutely necessary for the guide of workmen not very expert in their art. it will add considerably to the expence, and I would not have incurred it but that I was sensible of it's necessity. the price of the model will be 15 guineas. I shall know in a few days the cost of the drawings which probably will be the triple of the model: however this is but my conjecture. I will make it as small as possible, pay it, and render you an account in my next letter. You will find on examination that the body of this building covers an area but two fifths of that which is proposed and begun; of course it will take but about one half the bricks; and of course this circumstance will enlist all the workmen, and people of the art against the plan. again the building begun is to have 4 porticos; this but one. it is true that this will be deeper than those were probably proposed, but even if it be made three columns deep, it will not take half the number of columns. the beauty of this is ensured by experience and by the suffrage of the whole world; the beauty of that is problematical, as is every drawing, however well it looks on paper, till it be actually executed: and tho I suppose there is more room in the plan begun, than in that now sent, yet there is enough in this for all the three branches of government and more than enough is not wanted. this contains 16. rooms. to wit 4. on the first floor; for the General court, Delegates, Lobby, & Conference. eight on the 2d floor for the Executive, the Senate, & 6 rooms for committees and juries: and over 4. of these smaller rooms of the 2d floor are 4. Mezzaninos or Entresoles, serving as offices for the clerks of the Executive, the Senate, the Delegates & the court in actual session. it will be an objection that the work is begun on the other plan. but the whole of this need not be taken to pieces, and of what shall be taken to pieces the bricks will do for inner work, mortar never becomes so hard & adhesive to the bricks in a few months but that it may easily be chipped off. and upon the whole the plan now sent will save a great proportion of the expence. in my letter of Aug.13. I mentioned that I could send workmen from hence as I am in hopes of receiving your orders precisely in answer to that letter I shall defer actually engaging any till I receive them. in like manner I shall defer having plans drawn for a Governor's house until further orders, only assuring you that the receiving and executing these orders will always give me a very great pleasure, and the more should I find that what I have done meets your approbation. I have the honour to be, [etc.etc.]

TH: JEFFERSON[1]

On the following day Jefferson wrote to James Monroe, then in the Virginia Legislature:

I send by this packet drawings for the Capitol & prison at Richmond. they are addressed to the Directors of the public buildings. if you have a curiosity to see them, open the second package which goes herewith, only being so good as to do them up again in the same way & send them off by the first post. I think they will be a gratification to yourself and such members as like things of that kind.[2]

The progress of the plaster model can be traced in subsequent letters. On June 15, 1786, Jefferson wrote to Messrs. Buchanan & Hay: "The model of the Capitol being at length finished, I heve sent it down the Seine to Havre, it being necessary that it should go by water . . . "[3] Finally, on December 26, he explains an additional delay, and incloses the bill of lading for the Atlantic voyage.[4]

The impression already given by Jefferson's Memoirs that he himself dictated the style of the building, selected the precise model, and drew the plans of the interior, is greatly strengthened by these letters. His "ideas respecting the stile and Ornaments proper for such a work" were expressed immediately on the receipt of the first letter from the directors, a "considerable time" before he could find "an architect whose taste had been formed on a study of the antient models of this art." He not only states that he decided on following the Maison Carrée before he went to Clérisseau, but he constantly resisted Clérisseau's suggestions to depart from it in this or that respect. Jefferson's letters

[1] L. C., Jefferson Papers, 1st Series, Vol. 2, No. 22.

[2] Bergh, Vol. 5, p. 272.

[3] Bergh, Vol. 4, p. 346.

[4] Calendar of the Correspondence of Thomas Jefferson. Part 1, p. 54.

in which these statements occur are, to be sure, not wholly ingenuous, being colored by his desire to secure the adoption of the design through invoking the authority of antiquity and the professional reputation of Clérisseau. For this very reason, however, we may be confident that he does not overstate his own contribution, and may conclude that he was responsible for at least as much as has just been outlined.

Evidence on the light in which both men viewed Clérisseau's service is given by their accounts and correspondence in the Virginia archives. In Jefferson's account with the Commonwealth of Virginia, dated December 9, 1789 occurs the entry: "1786 June 2, Pd. Clérisseault for his assistants in drawing the plans of the Capitol and Prison, 288 livres." The voucher accompanying this is a bill in Clérisseau's handwriting, as follows:

Debourse pour Monsieur Jefferson
les plans de prizons coupe et elevation 2 Louis
les plans du model premier et Rez de chaussé . . . . . 2 Louis
l'élevation de la façade . . . . . 2 Louis
élevation Latérale . . . . . 2 Louis
les antiquités de Nimes . . . . . 3 Louis
toutes les mesures et profil pour lexécution du modele . . . . . 1 Louis
il faut observer que tous les dessins ont eté obligé d'etre fait deux fois avant de les dessiner proprement

I do certify that the above Acct Amted to 288 Livres. J. Latil
9 dec 89

Clérisseau's letter of acknowledgement, bearing the same date, likewise speaks only of payment of expenses and makes it certain that he regarded the transaction as Jefferson did, rather as a loan of his draughtsmen for the drawing up of Jefferson's design, than as regular professional services:

Monsieur, je suis sensible a la complaisance que vous avez eu de m'envoyer mes deboursés. quant a la maneire obligeante avec la quel vous vous exprimé, j'en suis des plus satisfait. je suis entiérement satisfait lorsque je suis assuré que vous este satisfait du zele avec lequel jai secondé vos intentions. qu'il me soit permis de me trouver tres honoré de trouver quelque moien pour pouvoir meriter votre confiance et votre amitié. l'amour que jai pour mon art est tel que je ne puis vous exprimer combien il m'est satisfaisant de trouver un vrai amateur de l' antiquité. j'aurai l'honneur de vous voir pour vous entretenir et vous prouver que le plaisir que j'ai eu de vous obliger est superieur a mes peines. je suis avec toute la consideration que vous merite.

Monsieur
Votre tres humble
tres obeissant serviteur
Clerisseau

a Auteuil ce 2 juin 1786

A further entry in Jefferson's account with the state, "June 3, 1789, Pd Odiot for coffee pot as a present to Clerissaut for his trouble with the drawings &c, of public buildings 423 livres" shows that Clérisseau's own personal services and advice were also handsomely acknowledged, but in a way which only confirms our view of their advisory character.

Two later letters from Clérisseau to Jefferson are preserved, one, of March 16, 1792, by the Massachusetts Historical Society, the other, of May 23, 1797, in the Library of Congress; they testify, however, merely to Clérisseau's confidence in Jefferson's friendliness. The first recommends a compatriot who is emigrating to America; the second, written in poverty during the Revolution, offers his library for sale. Among the polite formulæ with which this second letter opens, he says:

"je conserve toujours les sentiments les plus sensibles pour une personne qui a bien voulu m'honorer de sa confiance et qui a daigné estre satisfait de mes productions."

As the productions referred to might well include his book, which Jefferson had bought, his drawings of antiquities, and other architectural works, no inference is to be drawn that Clérisseau was the designer of the Capitol. On the contrary, the study of all the written documents gives a strong presumption that Jefferson's part was the larger, a presumption which the study of the drawings will confirm and enlarge.

B. The Design as Proposed by the Directors.

With the letters of the Directors at hand, it is possible to recognize as their "inclosed draught" a drawing preserved in the Coolidge collection in Boston. (Fig. 1.) The remarks which accompany the plan have disappeared, but the plan itself bears manifest evidences of being a sketch intended to convey the requirements for the building projected. Its suggestive character appears in the lack of windows, and the note, "the windows to be plac'd as found most convenient in the Ellivation." The building shown is rectangular, having a relatively small portico placed against each of the sides, as appears by notes in the margin. It thus corresponds with Jefferson's statement, cited on page 14, that the building begun was to have four porticos. A central hall traverses the building in each of two stories, with rooms ranged on either side in rather accidental fashion, answering closely in number and relative importance to those named in Jefferson's description of his design.

C. Jefferson's Studies for the Design.

The Coolidge collection includes also a group of drawings, the general agreement of which with Jefferson's description, and with the Capitol as it stood until 1906, leaves no doubt that they have reference to the building. As variants one of another, still bearing suggestions for further modification, they are evidently preliminary studies, and the identity of paper and technique with earlier and later drawings of Jefferson's establishes with certainty that they were drawn by his own hand.

There are seven sheets in the group, four of plans on red-lined coördinate paper, three of elevations on paper with coördinate lines embossed without ink. The drawings themselves are executed with a finely pointed pencil, the elevations in line only, the walls in plan filled in with a solid pencil tone. Neither coördinate paper nor lead pencil was used in drawings made by Jefferson before his residence in France; on the other hand, both were his preferred media after his return.[1]

Of the red-lined sheets, three are engraved, with main division slightly less than the English inch, and divided into ten parts. The total shortage below English measure in the length of the plate, about twelve and a half inches, varies from three-sixteenths to three-eighths of an inch, which conforms to what might be expected from the shrinkage of the paper after impression. There is no water-mark or other indication of the origin of the paper except what may be furnished by its English sub-division. Many other drawings on this paper exist in the Coolidge collection, of which it will suffice to mention one as having no connection with Clérisseau—a plan of one of the pavilions for the University of Virginia, which must have been made as late as 1817. The fourth sheet with red lines was ruled by hand none too carefully. Of the embossed paper used for the three elevations, only

[1] Cf. the drawings reproduced and studied in the article on Monticello, already cited.

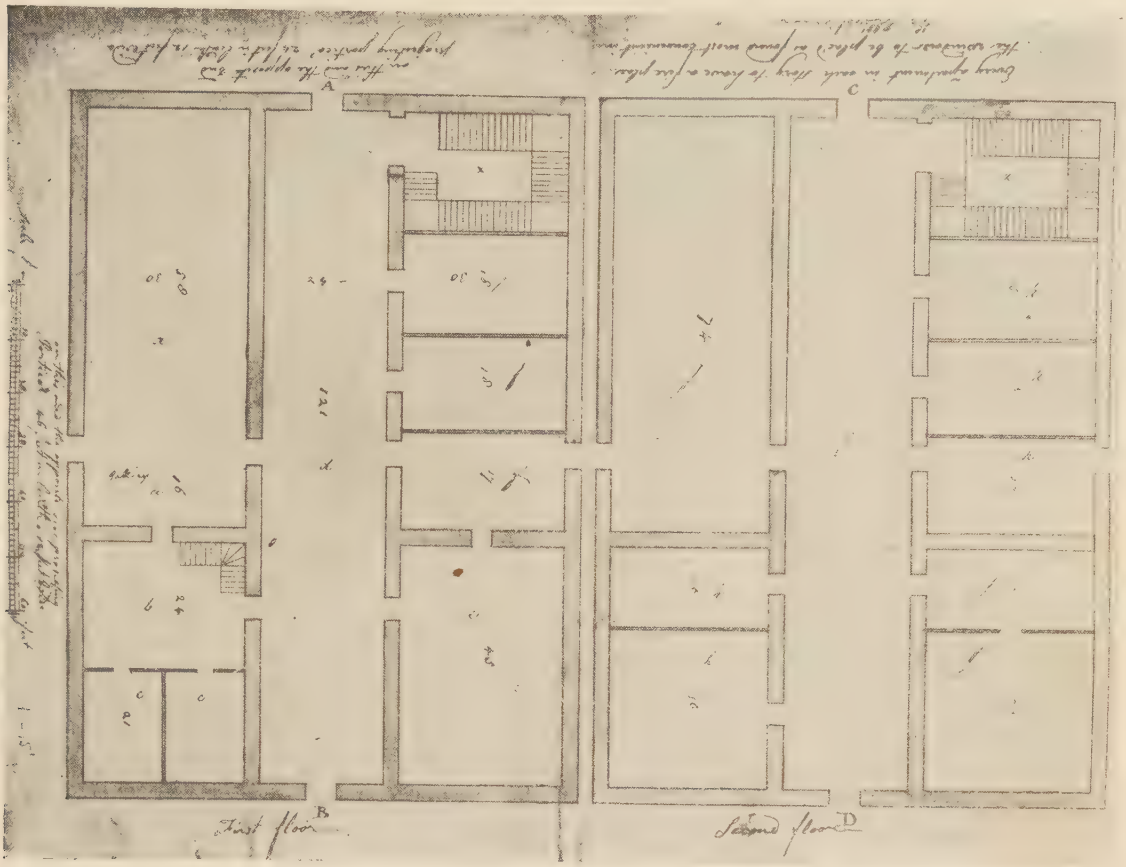

FIGURE 1

one other sheet exists among Jefferson's drawings, but it bears a drawing of which Jefferson's authorship can be in little doubt,—a plan for the grounds at Monticello, evidently preparatory to the remodeling of 1796, but bearing later notes, one of them dated May 23, 1808.

This coincidence of materials, of course, is not sufficient to establish Jefferson's authorship of the Capitol sketches. Their identity of technique with other drawings of Jefferson's, however, is equally striking. Self-taught as a draughtsman, and approaching architecture with geometric and formal preconceptions fostered by his allegiance to Palladio, Jefferson's manner was calculated, mechanical, and precise,—the very antithesis to the free and intuitive method of men of artistic training, like Clérisseau. The exactness and Palladian detail of the elevations of the Capitol repeat verbatim the language of corresponding drawings made by Jefferson before his European journey.[1]

Before studying the design as exhibited in these drawings it will be well to examine their possible sources on the formal side, the drawings of the Maison Carrée which were accessible to Jefferson. The building is figured in Book IV of Palladio's "Architecture," Jefferson's prime authority in previous years; it is shown with greater detail and exactness in Clérisseau's "Monuments de Nismes," which Jefferson mentions in his Memoir. We have seen that he purchased a copy from the author,

[1]Cf. especially the Ionic portico of the garden pavilion, bearing the date, April 23, 1779, reproduced in the article on Monticello, Fig. 18a.

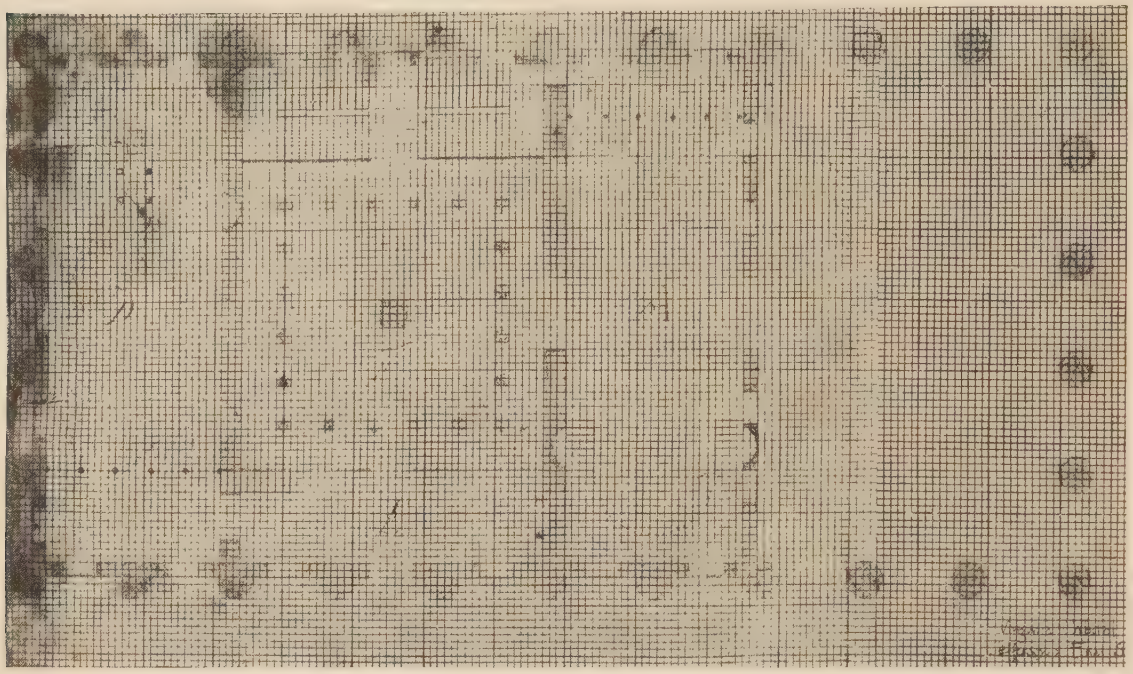

FIGURE 2

charging it to the state; an entry, whether for this copy or another, appears in the catalogue of his private library. Jefferson also acquired an additional copy of Palladio while in Paris,[1] but the dates of these purchases we do not know. In Palladio's engraving the dimensions of the building are rationalized to conform to the modular system which the author, following Vitruvius, everywhere introduces. The lower diameter of the column being taken as a module, the height of the column and entablature are given as ten modules and as two and a half modules respectively, the intercolumniation as one and a half modules, or "pycnostyle"—the close spacing of Vitruvius. In Clérisseau's plates, on the other hand, all the dimensions, even those apparently corresponding to each other, are given minutely in French feet and inches. Frequently differing in absolute size from the measures as stated by Palladio, they result in a somewhat different set of proportional ratios, less conveniently integral. Column and entablature, to be sure, are of nearly the same proportional height, but the space between the columns averages about one and three-fourths modules, instead of one and a half, a spacing justified by no classical theory. Since the number of columns and spaces are the same in each case, it follows that the total proportions of the length to the width vary substantially in the two representations.[1] It should therefore be relatively easy, provided Jefferson did, in fact, rigorously observe the proportions, to see which authority he followed, and ascertain which study in the series, from its closer relations with the prototype, seems to have been made first.

There can be no question that the first project was the plan reproduced in Fig. 2, and that it was derived from the engravings of Clérisseau's "Monuments de Nismes."

[1] The entries for the Clérisseau and for De Chambray's edition of Palladio occur in his MS Library catalogue (at the Massachusetts Historical Society) in the darker ink and finer hand which characterize the entries for his foreign purchases.

[1] For full details concerning these and other dimensions and proportions, see the table on page 29.

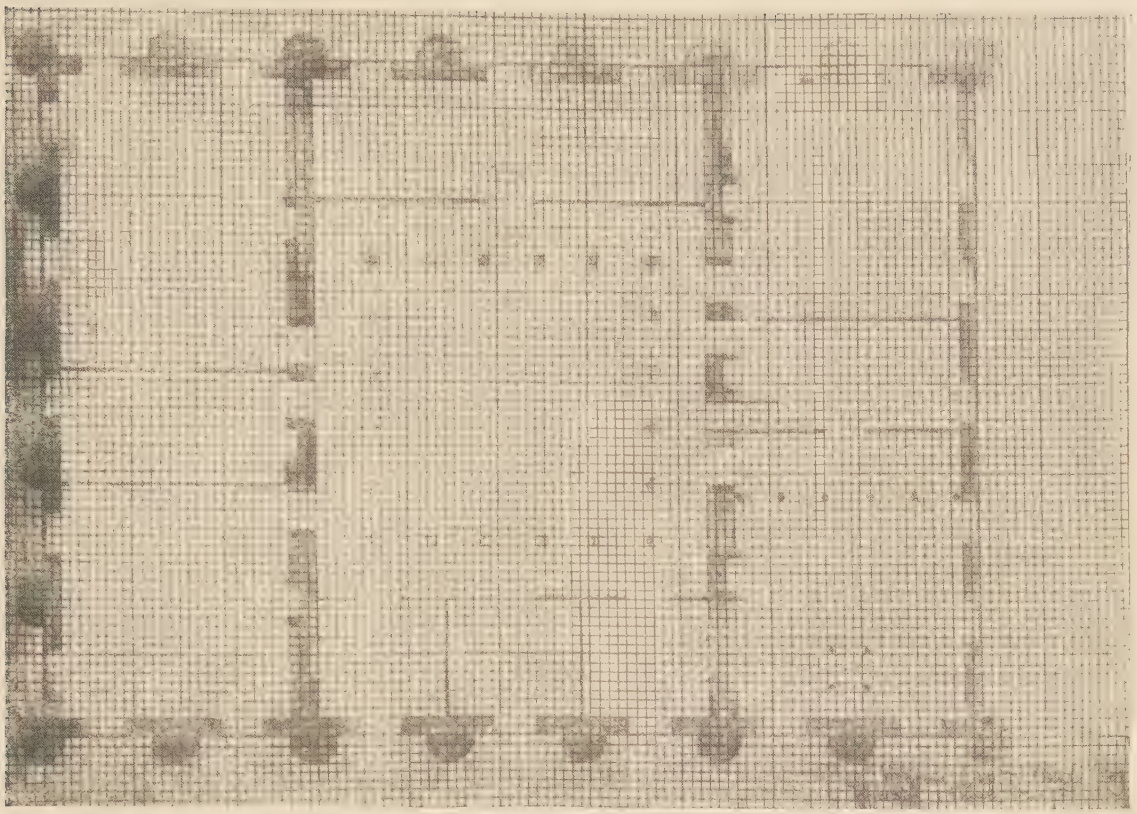

FIGURE 3

The spacing of the exterior ordonnance is, with a negligible percentage of error, exactly on the same proportions as in Clérisseau's plan (see Table, page 29). The scale, however, was much greater, the total length being 153 feet 9 inches, against about 85 English feet for the Maison Carrée; the module—the diameter of the column—5 feet 5 inches, against about 3 feet. Neither of these important dimensions is in round numbers, and it becomes a question what did determine the size. The answer would seem to be furnished by a striking coincidence between Jefferson's study and the Directors' sketch. If the depth of the porticos there stated be added to the scaled length of the main mass, the total length amounts to 153 feet 6 inches, identical with the total length of Jefferson's study. The exterior of Jefferson's first scheme, then, was determined by the proportions of the Maison Carrée as given by Clérisseau, and, very naturally, by the extreme dimension furnished by the Directors.

The interior disposition, in contrast with that shown by the Directors, is clear and largely handled, corresponding in general with Jefferson's description and with the building as executed. A monumental hall, square, running through two stories, and focusing on the pedestal for Washington's statue, occupies the center of the cella, between two principal rooms at the ends and the shallow rooms, one containing the stairs, at the sides. The precise relative sizes of these rooms was determined by the fenestration, two bays of the side going to each of the end rooms and three to the central hall. This gave a very large central space, permitting a peristyle of six columns each way, but

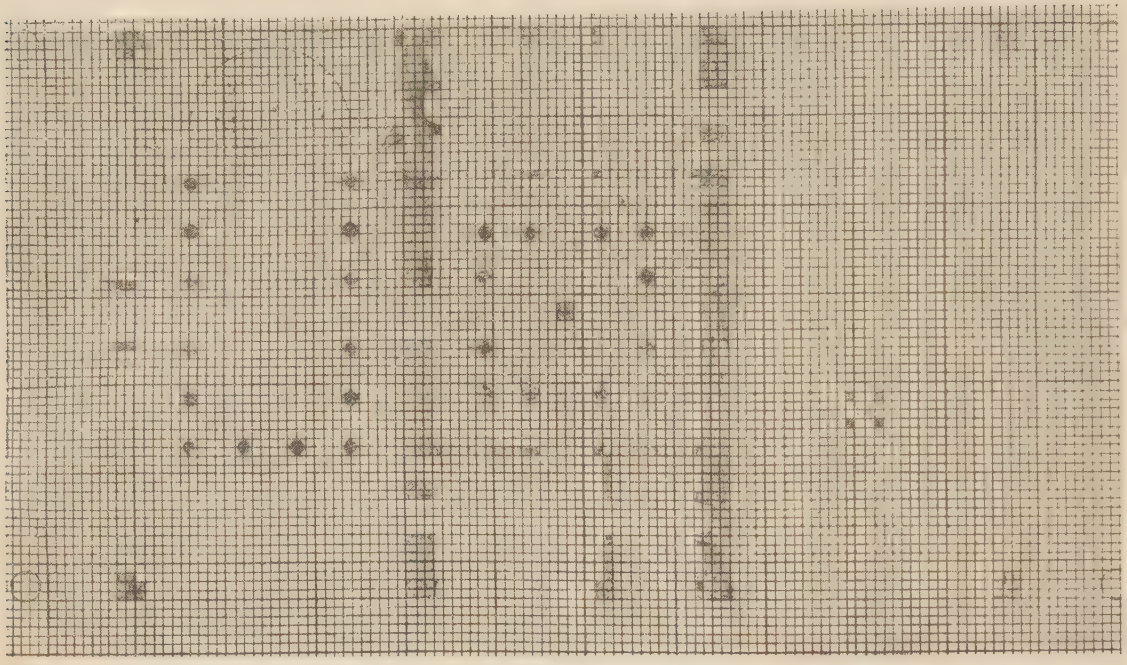

FIGURE 4

made the end rooms comparatively narrow, twenty-five feet by seventy. The cutting off of galleries supported on columns, and the further subdivision by railings, do not noticeably improve this disproportion. The second story (Fig. 3) has the same main divisions as the first, with a second order of columns in the central hall, and smaller rooms separated by light partitions over the long rooms at the ends. The various rooms in the first-floor plan were indicated by capital letters, referring to some legend not to be found. The distribution of these letters is identical with that on later plans, which will be found to permit a readier identification.

The two remaining plans (Figs. 4 and 5) show little or nothing outside the ashlar lines of the cella, and obviously embody attempts to improve the proportions of the individual rooms. Each divides the length of the cella into three equal parts, with the central hall square, and the length of the end rooms twice their breadth. Here the inspiration is evidently from a passage in Palladio, Book I, Chapter 21: "In the length of halls I use not to exceed two squares, made from the breadth; but the nearer they come to a square, the more convenient and commendable they will be." Among "the most beautiful and proportionable manner of rooms" Palladio names those which are square or of two squares. The difficulty of these schemes in which the interior was determined first was that of afterward fitting the exterior order to it. With neither of the schemes in hand is it possible to place either columns or pilasters along its sides, no matter what their proportions, and have five spaces on the end and seven on the side, all equal, as in the original. Even had the spacing been different on the end and on the side, the new proportions of the interior would not have permitted a symmetrical position of the windows in the end rooms. These difficulties might have been overcome by the omission of the exterior order along the sides, as in the studies for the elevations, and may well have given the first suggestion for the omission, though the possibilities of free-

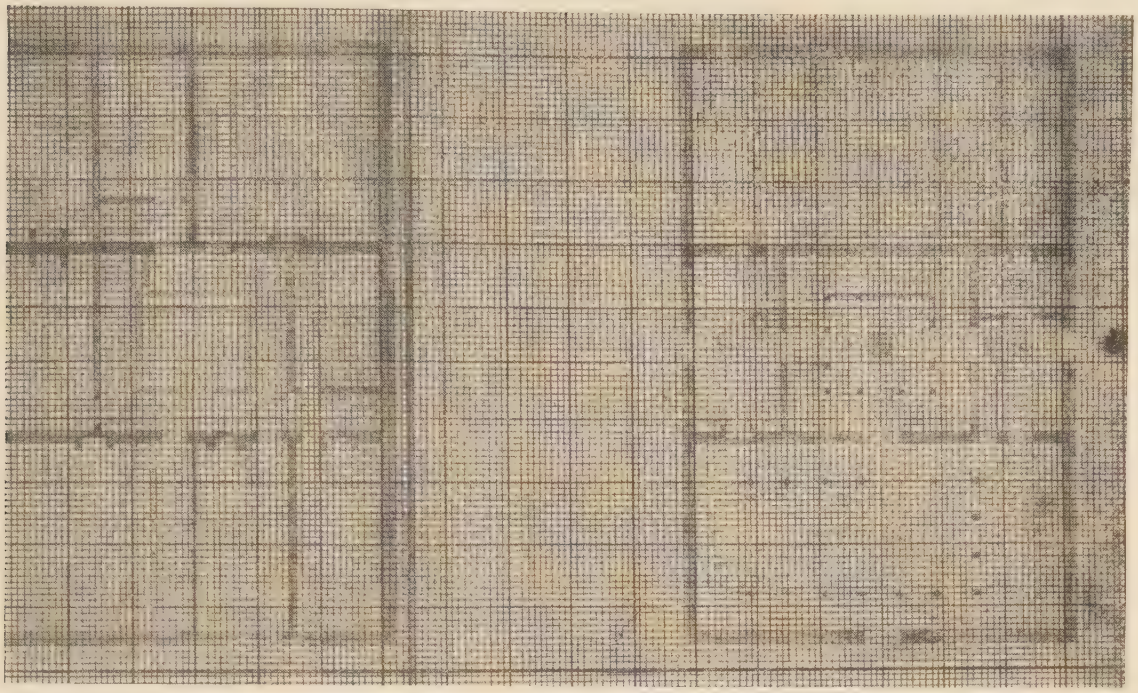

FIGURE 5

dom thereby secured were ultimately left unutilized.

The interior arrangement of the first story is substantially identical in the two studies, the second story is shown only in the one on hand-ruled paper (Fig. 5). The reduced central hall has now four columns on a side in the first story, and none in the second, a simple railing being substituted there. In one of the end rooms, however, the greater width secured is used to elaborate the subdivision, a basilican arrangement of columns being introduced, leading up to the railed exedra at the end. The stairs are moved into the aisle of the central hall, but otherwise the arrangement, both upstairs and down, follows the general lines of the first study. The basilican colonnade, just mentioned, now gives us the clue to the arrangement of the rooms mentioned in Jefferson's lists, for it can denote nothing else but the court-room, for which Palladio himself recommends and illustrates a form on the antique model (Book III, Plate XVII). The same holds for the room with the corresponding letter A in the first study. D must then be the House of Delegates; F, the central hall, must be the Conference Room; E, the House Lobby; B, the vestibule to the court-room; and C, the office for its clerk. Upstairs, the Senate Room is certainly the large room with a gallery, situated over one end of the court-room. All this corresponds perfectly with the indications given by Jefferson in his formal description of the design, and in his letter of January 26, 1786.

The principal difference between the two studies under discussion, and a very notable one, lies in the intended relation of the columns to the cella. On the one shown in Fig. 4, instead of the single deep portico, a portico at each end, only one bay deep, is suggested,—a radical departure from the prototype, whether made in the interest of formal symmetry or of expression of the balance of legislative and judicial functions in the interior. The external walls of the cella are left incomplete to permit

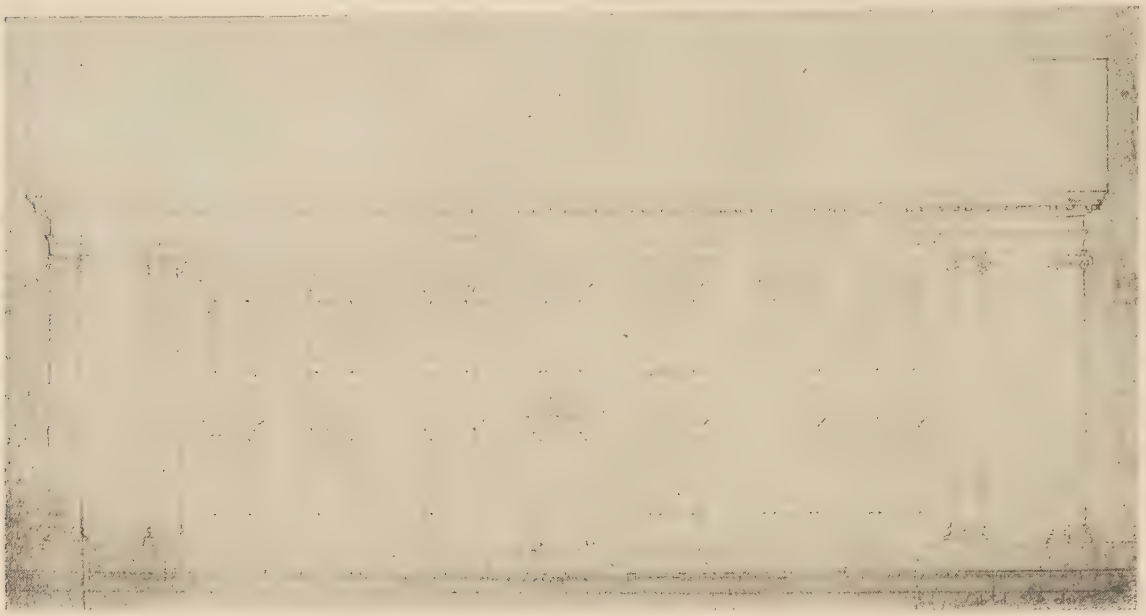

FIGURE 6

adjustment of the fenestration, but the faces of the corner columns project so little beyond the outer face of the walls as to make it evident that only pilasters could have been intended, and they perhaps only at the corners. The diameter of the columns shown would result in an intercolumniation of about two and a half modules, against one and three-quarters for Clérisseau's Maison Carrée and Jefferson's first study. The eustyle intercolumniation of two and a quarter modules is indissolubly associated in Palladio's formulæ with the Ionic order (Book I, Chapter 13), and is used in Jefferson's studies for the elevations with Ionic columns. There can be little question, then, that the change from Corinthian to Ionic was already proposed when the plan in hand was made. The third plan shows not even a vestige of colonnade, yet it may safely be assumed from the position of the cella on the paper that a single deep portico was again intended. That this drawing was made later in order may now be proved. The other plans, including first study, were made on one kind of engraved coördinate paper, the elevations which embody the final version are on another kind, likewise engraved. The drawing just considered, on an improvised sheet, imitating the style of the earlier engraved ones, must obviously fall between the two groups, and hence proves to be the latest study for the plan.

The elevations do not correspond exactly to any of the plans, but show further changes of dimensions and proportion of the same sort as those between one plan and the next. This may point to a certain interval between the dates of composition, and possibly to the making of intermediate studies, now lost; but it must not be forgotten that Jefferson's mathematical methods made it possible to derive an elevation without drawing the corresponding plan. The difference of paper is not significant, as we know that Jefferson had temporarily run out of the red-lined paper even before he made the latest of the plans.

One of the elevations (Fig. 6) shows the side of the building with a portico at each end, one bay deep, as in the intermediate plan. The Ionic order is of the conven-

FIGURE 7

tional Palladian proportions, with a module of 4 feet 2 inches. As in the intermediate plan again, pilasters only respond to the columns; they occur merely at the corners of the building, and are moved away from the end windows in an effort to widen the rooms inside while keeping the windows symmetrical in the rooms. The model and the building show that the experiment with two porticos was not considered successful, and that the accepted studies are the drawings reproduced in Figs. 7 and 8. The equality of modules and heights between these two drawings proves that the front elevation here belonged with this side elevation, and not with the previous one.

The scheme shown retains the single portico of the original, but this is two columns in depth instead of three, and the cella has no ordonnance but a single pilaster next to the portico. The building is laid out on a module of 4 feet 4 inches, with the column nine modules high, the entablature one and four-fifths, and the intercolumniation two and a quarter modules, all as recommended by Palladio (Book I, Chapters 13 and 16). The total length of the building is almost exactly what would be obtained by figuring the length of a columnar building of the same number of bays and the same module. The relation of the pilaster-respond to the end window is not changed as in the rejected study, and the fenestration is such that pilasters might be added without any change in the windows (as they actually were added when the building was erected). The proportions of the end rooms, approximately calculable on the assumption that they were still based on the fenestration, lie between the long-and-narrow form of the first study and the two-to-one ratio desired.

The forms of detail—doors, windows, cornice, and capitals—are all forms shown by Palladio, which Jefferson had already used with equal literalness in his designs for Monticello.[1] Certain problems met here for the first time, such as the Ionic capital on the angle and the return of the corner pilaster, are handled in a tentative and unsuccessful way, but in general the design is well studied and consistent. As in Jefferson's earlier work, the classical forms are still rationalized according to Palladian rules; the height of the pediment, for instance, is determined by Palladio's general formula, two-ninths of the span, instead of the proportions given for the Maison Carrée. Indeed we now see clearly that Jefferson's insistence on the exactness with which he had followed the Maison Carrée was largely to prevent further tampering with his design, and that the design really departed from its model in almost every way,—in dimensions, in proportion, in ordonnance, and in detail. For the first time in Jefferson's work, however, the whole effect is not merely Palladian; the temple form appears—it is Palladianized Roman.

The relation of Jefferson's description to the studies now becomes clear. The notes from which it was worked up, since lost, must have included calculations similar to those which we have in his note-books

[1] Kimball: Monticello, esp. Figs, 22, 25, and p. 128.

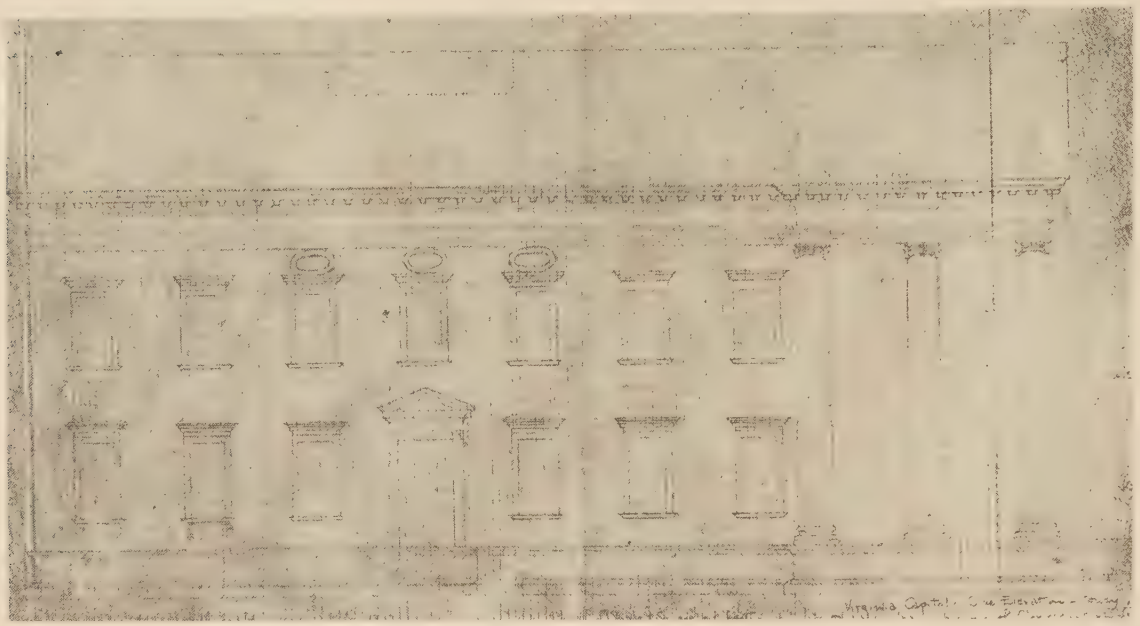

FIGURE 8

for Monticello, with the parts of the order figured out on a modular basis. In re-deriving the dimensions of the building after a long interval, it is not surprising that certain discrepancies should have crept in, and the correspondence between the description and the final studies (see Table, page 29) is sufficient to remove any doubt that the description refers essentially to the building as shown by them. Its differences from the first study are wide, and the most precise coincidence of the module and heights with the rejected elevation, otherwise very different, is apparently accidental. There can be no further doubt that the drawings given to Clérisseau at the time the notes were made were those we have identified as the final studies. Jefferson's authorship of them and his own essential completion of the design are thus given another confirmation.

That Clérisseau did make some positive contributions to the design, however, is also certain. What some of these were appears in the soft-pencil lines added with professional facility to Jefferson's laborious and precise elevations. They occur in the front view and the final side view, the rejected side view having none. The principal changes affect the enframements of the doors and windows and the slope of the pediment. Consoles were added at the sides of the doors and beneath the window-sills, panels were introduced below the sills of the first-story windows and between the upper and lower ranges, and minor changes in the size and projection of the cornice-members were indicated. The apex of the pediment was lowered so that its proportions, instead of being Jefferson's favorite, 2 : 9, corresponded to the slope of the Maison Carrée as shown in Clérisseau's engraving. Pedestals were suggested to buttress the steps which were necessary to reach the side doors.

D. The Model Preserved at Richmond.

The interpretation of the studies which has been given is confirmed by the model preserved in the Virginia State Library. (See Fig. 9, frontispiece.) Because of differences between this and the building as executed, doubts have sometimes

been expressed as to whether it is the original model sent from France. In fact these very differences should have precluded any idea that the model could have been made subsequently, unless for some remodeling. Its exact correspondence with Jefferson's drawings, as corrected, now removes this last possibility. As a further check on the authenticity of both, however, we have with the vouchers at Richmond, the directions for unpacking the model in the handwriting of Bloquet,[1] its maker. They say; "le fond de la petittes quesse est attacher au plateaux du modelle avec 6 visse en fer pour le rendre immobile dans la quesse." The holes for these screws, just six in number, still exist in the under side of the platform.

The model shows the design essentially as in Jefferson's final studies, with the modifications indicated upon them by Clérisseau. There are some further changes of relatively slight importance: the frieze and cornice of the second-story window-caps are removed and small oblong windows are placed over them; the pediment of the side door is replaced by a horizontal cornice, the steps at the side are turned along the building, the columns and pilasters are fluted. The actual dimensions of the model are, in general, with great exactness, twice the corresponding dimensions of Jefferson's final studies. The scale of the model then must be five English feet to the English inch. That Clérisseau made practically no change in Jefferson's dimensions is further evidence of the correctness of our conclusion that his part was secondary.

E. The Drawings Prepared by Clérisseau's Assistants.

The final drawings sent to Virginia are not preserved at Richmond and a thorough search has failed to discover them elsewhere. The "ground plan, the elevation of the front, and the elevation of the side," which accompanied Jefferson's letter of January 26, 1786, arrived safely, as we know from their acknowledgement. The second-story plan was probably also included, as it appears with the others in Clérisseau's bill to Jefferson. The sections referred to in Jefferson's letter of transmission were probably never completed, as no item in payment for them appears in any of the accounts, and as the Commissioners' letter which crossed Jefferson's must have made him skeptical of the adoption of the plan.

The subsequent fate of these drawings is made clear by the following letters. On July 11, 1791, David Stuart, one of the commissioners for the new Federal City on the Potomac, wrote to Governor Beverly Randolph, of Virginia:

". . . Major L'Enfant is about drawing a model for the house of Legislature. I have mentioned to him the one sent in by Mr. Jefferson, which he desires to see. If there is no impropriety in it, I would beg you to send it to him by stage. His residence is at Geo. Town. If not adopted it shall be returned immediately."[1]

Two weeks later the Governor replied:

". . . Your favor of the 11th inst was duly received and would have been immediately answered but for the absence of Mr. Hay one of the directors of the public Buildings—I did not suppose that you expected the model of the Capitol in plaister of paris to be forwarded by the Stage. I therefore called upon Mr. Hay for such drafts of the house as had been sent from France by Mr. Jefferson. You will receive enclosed in a small tin case a Draft of the Ground plot, together with a side and front view of the Building which I beg may be returned as soon as Major L'Enfant can take copies of them as I am told they are essentially necessary for the Completion of some work here. . ."[2]

On August 5 Stuart again wrote:

"I have received your letter accompanied by the draft of the Public Buildings, and return to you my thanks for your kindness. As soon as Major L'Enfant is done with it, I will return it . . ." [3]

[1] The entries in Jefferson's accounts give the name as Fouquet, but the vouchers are signed unmistakably Bloquet.

[1] Calendar of Virginia State Papers, Vol. 5, p. 342.

[2] Letters of the Commissioners of Public Buildings, 1791–93, Vol. 1, p. 20.

[3] Calendar of Virginia State Papers, Vol. 5, p. 356.

The promised return was never made, however, as we learn from a letter of March 18, 1799, written to Governor James Wood by William Hay, then retired from the Directors of Public Buildings:

"At the time the late Beverly Randolph, Esq., was Governor, the Plans and Drawings of the Capitol and the Public Prison, which were sent from Paris by Mr. Jefferson, were delivered to him, and were by him transmitted in a tin case to the Directors of the Public Buildings in the Federal city. Since that time I have never seen them. . ." [1]

The reason for this is not far to seek. L'Enfant was dismissed from the government service in February, 1792—about six months after the time the Capitol drawings were entrusted to him, leaving the custody of his papers in dispute. The Commissioners claimed that he declined to pass over the papers of his office; he protested that they were stolen by order of the Commissioners during his absence.[2] Many of L'Enfant's personal papers are now the property of James Dudley Morgan, Esquire, of Washington, but the Virginia drawings are not among them, nor do they appear to be preserved in the Library of Congress nor in the office of the Commissioner of Public Buildings and Grounds.

Fortunately the lack of the final drawings of the Virginia Capitol makes no serious gap in our information. There is no reason to question their exact correspondence to the model prepared from them. If the model had been corrected from the drawings in any important respect, Jefferson would have undoubtedly called attention to it, as he did to his desire for a deeper portico. The executed building, as we shall see, itself gives no evidence contrary to the assumption of identity, which may thus be taken as established.

More to be regretted is the absence of the discarded set of drawings referred to by Clérisseau in his bill to Jefferson, which says "Il faut observer que tous les dessins ont eté obligé d'estre fait deux fois avant de les dessiner proprement." These might throw further light on the development of the design and on the relative contributions of Jefferson and Clérisseau, but so far they have not been located. There exist at the Winter Palace in Petrograd twenty volumes of Clérisseau's Roman architectural drawings bought by Catherine II.[1] If these were purchased during his stay in Russia in 1778–82 they cannot, of course, include the drawings of which we are in search. It is possible, however, that the purchase was made or supplemented in 1797 when, as we have seen, Clérisseau sought to dispose of his library. A letter addressed to the curator in Petrograd has brought no reply.

The necessity for a complete re-drawing while the matter was in Clérisseau's hands is difficult to explain, if Clérisseau had in hand from the start Jefferson's final studies with which the model agrees. It might imply merely that Jefferson changed his own ideas, or it might be thought to indicate that some of the changes which we have traced in the course of his studies resulted themselves from suggestions from Clérisseau, prior to those indicated on the elevations. While these questions cannot be decided with certainty, a number of statements, not wholly consistent, may be brought to bear upon them.

In his letter to Douglas, Jefferson states that his description is written from notes made when he gave the plan to Clérisseau, yet the dimensions given in it correspond so closely with those of the final elevations as to make it improbable that a drawing was undertaken merely for the sake of changes so slight. The notes, however, may well have been made on Jefferson's giving Clérisseau a second, revised plan.

Jefferson says in his letter of January 26,

[1] Calendar of Virginia State Papers, Vol. 4, p. 10.

[2] Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Vol. 2, pages 139–142 and passim.

[1] F. Noack in Thieme-Becker: *Künstler-Lexikon*, Article Clérisseau.

1786 that it was Clérisseau who suggested that the portico be made only two columns deep, yet this arrangement appears already in Jefferson's final side elevation. He says, however, that this was the only instance in which Clérisseau persuaded him to depart from the prototype.[1] Numerous others remain, some of which at least seem more consonant with French methods of thought than with Jeffersonian methods. The complete omission of an engaged order, while it had ample precedent in other classic temples and might have resulted solely from economy, suggests the puristic ideas of eighteenth century *architecture raisonée*. This appears above all in the rejected side elevation with its shallow porticos at both ends, so much better than the single deep portico for the expression of two rooms of equal importance, yet so contrary to Jefferson's declarations concerning the dangers of departure from the antique precedent.

Possibly a clue may be found in certain passages hitherto unstressed. Jefferson's Memoir says: "I applied to M. Clerissault . . . to have me a model of the building made in stucco, only changing the order from the Corinthian to the Ionic." Clérisseau's bill uses the words, "les plantes du model," for the plans of the building. It would seem that in the first instance a close approximation had been wanted, doubtless with engaged columns and windows between, as in Jefferson's earliest plan; and that a set of drawings along these lines was begun under Clérisseau's direction. Meanwhile, however, Jefferson doubtless discussed the matter with Clérisseau, who may well have made criticisms and suggestions which Jefferson canvassed, along with fresh ideas of his own, in further studies,—the two later plans and the elevations, which now first became necessary. He apparently decided not to use the two portico scheme, but determined to substitute the other modified study for the scheme already under way. He must now be assumed to have made the notes on which the description sent to Douglas was based, and given the drawings to Clérisseau, who revised their detail, but had his assistants draw them up otherwise unchanged, producing the final drawings sent to Virginia.

[1] In Jefferson's Memoir he mentions also the substitution, at the instance of Clérisseau, of "the modern capital of Scamozzi" for the "more noble capital of antiquity." The capital of Scamozzi, with four pairs of volutes, placed diagonally on the corners, was indeed used in the building but the capitals were not added as we shall see, until a late date, after the original drawings had been lost. The model shows the Roman Palladian capital which Jefferson had used in his studies and elsewhere. As Jefferson makes no mention of a discrepancy between the model and the drawings in this respect, as he certainly would have done had he troubled to have the model corrected, it is reasonable to believe that the final drawings showed this also, and that Jefferson's memory was deceived by the change in execution.

F. Growth of the Design and Responsibility for It.

The growth of the design and the responsibility for it should now be fairly clear. Jefferson's statements in his Memoir are substantially accurate, but understate his own part; his letters, though doing better justice to his share, purposely exaggerate the responsibility of Clérisseau and the imitation of the antique. In the letters to Madison and Randolph this is easily explained as due to delicacy in claiming credit for a design whose adoption he was urging on grounds of superior merit; in the letters to the Directors, as calculated to prevent departures from the scheme. The drawings and the model show that the design, though a classic adaptation developed with some criticism, was essentially his own. The idea of such an adaptation was itself his; the Directors' sketch gave only the practical requirements and a limiting dimension. Clérisseau's attempts to rationalize the plan show that it can scarcely have been he who suggested the literal imitation of the temple form. Jefferson not merely selected a model for the exterior, and determined the arrangement of the interior, but fixed every principal dimension, both inside and out, after elaborate study and the rejection of many alternatives,—the final result having nothing in

common with its prototype except the general form. The Ionic order, with the changed proportions which its adoption necessitated, was apparently his idea. The omission of the order along the sides of the building may or may not have resulted from a suggestion by Clérisseau, but the new fenestration was his own. To Clérisseau are due, besides the reduced depth of the portico, certain minor changes, and the final forms of the details, which influence the stylistic aspect of the body of the building, but not its mass, subdivision, proportions, or interior arrangement. If one man is to be designated as the architect, it must unquestionably be Jefferson.

The plan, which is wholly his, is boldly and logically conceived, with the principal rooms occupying the axial positions, the minor elements well subordinated. The major balance is not between the two branches of the legislature, as in the typical capitol of today, but between the judicial branch and the legislative, as represented by the House of Delegates. Perhaps the democratic tendencies of Jefferson account for this identification of the legislature with its popular house, for, in practice, the court scarcely needed a larger room than the Senate. The conference-room, as the central hall is called, is a feature which corresponded with the existing Virginia Constitution, according to which the ballots of each house for governor, and so forth, were to be deposited and examined "in the conference-room." [1]

The exterior is an interesting compound of classicism and French academicism. The consoles and garlanded panels of the cella recall rather the manner of Gabriel than of Palladio, as suggested by the earlier studies. Whatever the motive was in omitting them, the lack of pilasters along the sides, though it weakens the unity of portico and cella, conforms at once to classical and French structural purism. The exterior has the sleekness and accomplishment self-understood in eighteenth-century France, with nothing of the unstudied artlessness of colonial America, and with a grandiose classic quality still relatively novel abroad—admirably symbolizing the aspirations of the new republican state. The glaring defects in the relation of the portico to the interior resulted from the antithesis which lay in the very program. As in the Roman triumphal arch and in Perrault's colonnade of the Louvre, it was the civilization and majesty of the State which were to be symbolized, and the columns were used not only as elements of intrinsic magnificence but as trophies of the classical culture of the builders. The portico was a frontispiece to all Virginia.

[1] The Constitutions of the Several Independent States of America . . . 2d edition. Boston, 1785, p. 126

DIMENSIONS & RELATIVE PROPORTIONS SHOWING DEVELOPMENT OF THE DESIGN OF THE VIRGINIA CAPITOL

ONLY SIGNIFICANT DIMENSIONS ARE GIVEN IN EACH CASE	DIRECTOR'S SKETCH	PALLADIO'S MAISON CARRÉE LEONI, BK. IV, PL. 87		CLERISSEAU'S MAISON CARRÉE ANT. de FRANCE		JEFFERSON'S PLAN No. 1		JEFFERSON'S PLAN No. 2.		JEFFERSON'S PLAN No. 3		JEFFERSON'S SIDE ELEVATION REJECTED		JEFFERSONS ACCEPTED FRONT & SIDE ELEV		JEFFERSON'S DESCRIPTION		MODEL~		FOVNDATION LAID BEFORE RECEIPT OF JEFFERSONS PLAN	MEASVRED DRAWINGS 1858	
	ENGLISH FEET	VICENTINE FEET	MOD-VLES	FRENCH FEET	MOD-VLES	ENGLISH FEET	MOD-VLES	ENGLISH FEET	MOD-VLES	ENGLISH FEET	MOD-VLES	ENGLISH FEET	MOD-VLES	ENGLISH FEET	MOD-VLES	ENGLISH FEET	MOD-VLES	ENGLISH INCHES	SCALE 1"=5'0"	ENGLISH FEET	ENGLISH FEET	%OVER MODEL
COLVMN-DIAMETER		CORINTHIAN 2'-9"	1.	CORINTHIAN 2'-9"	1.	c 5'-5"	> 1	c 3'-6½	1			4'-2"	1	4'-2" to 4'-6"	1@4'-4"	4'-2"	1		(d)	(e)	4'-8"	c10%
LENGTH OVTSIDE OVER ALL	153'-6" ±	71'-6"	2.6	c 78'-2"	2.84	153'9±	2.8½	c125"				134'		131'-6" (131'-0½")	@30½	?134' 132'-0½	@30±	26⅞"	131'-10	148'	146'	10
WIDTH OVTSIDE OVER ALL	119	38'-2"	c13¾"	40'-8⅞"	14.8	80'	14¾"	64'-6"	18.4±	(a) 70' (b) 64'-6"		est. c 73'	@17½	c 74'-6" (74'-9")	17.2 @17½	71'-10½	@17½			118'	84'-6"	
WIDTH OVTSIDE ASHLAR LINES	95	35'-5"	c12¾"			74'		64'		64'		est. c 70'6		est. c 72'-10		? 70' est. 70'-5⅝		15 1/16	75'-4½		83'-8"	11
ORDER~TOTAL HEIGHT		34'-4½"	12½	34'-2 3/16	c12½							45'		(c) c 46'-10" (46' 9⅜"	@10⅘	? 45'	10⅘	9½	47'-6±		53'	14
COLVMNS ~ HEIGHT		27'-6"	10	27'-3 3/16"	c10							37'-6"	9	(c) 39'	9	est. 37'-6"	@ 9	7 1/16	39'-4½		44'6"	14
ENTABLATVRE-HEIGHT		6'-10½"	2½	6'11"	2.53							7'-6"		c 7'-10" 7'-9⅜"	@1⅘	est. 7'-6"	@ 1⅘				8'6"	13
INTERCOLVMNIATION		Normal 4'-11½" Center, 5'-2"	1 3/8 c 1 3/8	Avg of N 4'9½" Center, 5'0¾"	1.74	c 9'6"	1¾	est c 8'8"	c 2.5			c 9'-4"		Normal 9'8" Center, 10"	(9'-9") @2¼	est. 9'-4½"	@ 2¼					
PROJECTION of PILASTERS OR ENG'D COLVMNS		1'-4½"	½	2'		3'						est. 8⅝"	@ ⅛	10" ± 8⅝"	@ ⅛	est. 8⅝	@ ⅛					
PEDIMENT (3 VPPER CORNERS OF CYMA) WIDTH				c 45'-6"																		
PEDIMENT (3 VPPER CORNERS OF CYMA) HEIGHT				c 8'6"																	(f) c 5'-27	
PEDIMENT (3 VPPER CORNERS OF CYMA) H ÷ W				1.87~c 52.7												2:9(c 6:27)						
CELLA LENGTH OVER ALL						109'		est.		(a) 104' (b) 98'6"		107'5±		105'-2"		est. 106'-8⅝" 98'-11½"	@23¾					
CELLA LENGTH OVTSIDE ASHLAR LINES	127' or 129'-6"					103'		100'		98'		est. c 106'		104'-4"		? 106'	c 20½	102'-6±			112'4"	
THICKNESS OF OVTSIDE WALLS		2'-9"	1			2'		2'		2'				c 3'		3'						
HOVSE of DELEGATES LENGTH INSIDE	74'					70'		60'		60'		est. c 64'6		est. c 67'		64'				? 75'	75'9"	
HOVSE of DELEGATES WIDTH INSIDE	30'					25'		30'		30'		c 28'		c 26'		30'				? 35'	31'	
ROTVNDA DIAMETER INSIDE						43'		30'		30'		38' to 40'		c 40'		36'					35'	

NOTES
(a) WITH ENGAGED COLVMNS
(b) " " PILASTERS
(c) THE COLVMNS OF THE FRONT ELEVATION ARE DRAWN 1½" HIGHER, BVT THIS IS CORRECTED BY FIGVRED DIMENSION & NOTE.
(d) ERRORS IN MEASVREMENT ARE INCREASED IN MVLTIPLYING
(e) DIMENSIONS AT THE PRINCIPAL STORY WOVLD HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT LESS
(f) MEASVREMENT ON PHOTOGRAPHS GIVES 2:9

III. The Executed Building

THE Capitol building as executed did not conform entirely to the design sent from abroad; Jefferson's foredoomed attempt to furnish his country with a perfect example of classic architecture was frustrated in part. He spoke in his "Memoir," as we have seen, of "some variations, not for the better, the most important of which, however, admit of future correction." Much the same phrases occur, amid the pardonable expressions of triumph, in his letter to William Short on first seeing the building after his return to America:

"Our new Capitol, when the corrections are made of which it is susceptible, will be an edifice of first rate dignity. Whenever it shall be finished with the proper ornaments belonging to it (which will not be in this age), it will be worthy of being exhibited alongside the most celebrated remains of antiquity."

Before we can ascertain in what the changes and incompleteness consisted, and how far, consequently, Jefferson's ideas could make their desired effect on contemporaries, we must examine the evidences concerning its original form and its later history.

A. Sources of Our Knowledge.

The early views of the Capitol are taken from such a distance or drawn at such small scale that they furnish but little information. The earliest, in a sketch of Richmond from the banks of the James River in 1796 by the architect Latrobe,[1] shows the main lines of the building essentially as they were until recent days, with pediment roof, and pilasters along the side walls.

The same is true of the engraving on the Bishop Madison map of Virginia, 1807,[1] and of later engravings known to me, or to the authorities of the Virginia State Library.

The drawing mentioned by Douglas in his letter to Jefferson seems never to have been published, perhaps for the reasons explained in the following letter:

"Agreeable to my plan, I had a drawing or front elevation of the Capitol taken by a person in Richmond, and I got it engraved by one of the most eminent artists in Philadelphia. The work was completed in the month of December & I had every reason to expect the copies or impressions, here in January. After waiting two months for them, in March they sent me the plate itself, but the copies, by some unlucky accident or other, were lost or mislaid, & have not yet been found . . ."[2]

Further particulars relating to the building, however, are given by the descriptions of early travelers. The Duc de la Rochfoucauld-Liancourt, an accurate and cultivated observer, gives this account of the Capitol in 1797:

"This edifice which is extremely vast, is constructed on the plan of the Maison Quarrée at Nismes, but on a much more extensive scale. The attics of the Maison Quarrée have undergone an alteration in the Capitol, to suit them to the convenience of the public offices of every denomination, which, thus perfectly secure against all accidents from fire, lie within reach of the tribunals, the executive council, the governor, the general assembly, who all sit in the Capitol, and draw to it a great

[1] Journal of Latrobe, 1905. p. 73.

[1] Reproduced in H. A. Christian's "Richmond, her Past and Present," 1912.

[2] Library of Congress, Jefferson Papers, 2d series, vol. 27 No. 16. No copy, either of the original register of 1800 or of the proposed republication is known to me, nor is either listed in Sabin or Growoll, or in the partial list of Virginia copyright entries for the period, printed in the reports of the State Librarian.

afflux of people. This building which is entirely of brick, is not yet coated with plaster: the columns, the pilasters, are destitute of bases and capitals: but the interior and exterior cornices are finished and are well executed. The rest will be completed with more or less speed: but, even in its present unfinished state, this building is, beyond comparison, the most noble, the greatest in all America. The internal distribution of the parts is extremely well adapted to the purposes for which it is destined. It was Mr. Jefferson who, during his embassy in France, sent the model of it. Already it is said to have cost a hundred and seventy thousand dollars; and fifteen thousand more are the estimated sum requisite for completing it and remedying some defects which have been observed in the construction."[1]

In the same year, Isaac Weld, a critic less sympathetic as well as less competent, makes this comment on the Capitol:

"From the opposite side of the river this building appears extremely well, as its defects cannot be observed at that distance, but on a closer examination it proves to be a clumsy ill-shapen pile. The original plan was sent over from France by Mr. Jefferson, and had great merit; but his ingenious countrymen thought they could improve it, and to do so placed what was intended for the attic story, in the plan, at the bottom, and put the columns on top of it.—In many other respects, likewise, the plan was inverted. The building is finished entirely with red brick: even the columns are formed of brick: but to make them appear like stone, they have been partially whitened with common whitewash. The inside of the building is but very little better than its exterior part. The principal room is for the house of representatives; this is also used for divine service, as there is no such thing as a church in town. The vestibule is circular (!), and very dark. . . . Ugly and ill-contrived as this building is, a stranger must not attempt to find fault with it, for it is looked upon by the inhabitants as a most elegant fabric."[2]

Obviously in his remark on the inversion of the attic story Weld is merely revealing his own ignorance of the classical podium and unconsciously showing how much superior was Jefferson's knowledge of ancient architecture to the current tradition of the day.

The description of Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar, who visited Richmond in 1825, is more intelligent, but careless in some respects. He says of the Capitol:

"It recalls the *maison quarrée* at Nismes in France. On one of the narrow sides of the longish rectangle stands a portico of eight Ionic columns. These columns are however only of wood (!), and have, seen from close at hand, a rather decayed aspect. The building has two entrances on the long sides, with flights of steps."[1]

Samuel Mordecai, an old resident of Richmond, who published in 1856 his reminiscences of early days, says:

"The *Capitol* itself, not then stuccoed, exposed its bare brick walls between the columns or pilasters. The roof was once flat, if I mistake not, and paved with tiles—an elevated roof was substituted."[2]

More precise and reliable, though fragmentary, are the indications furnished by the official letters, accounts and vouchers preserved at Richmond. Some of these have been published or summarized in the Calendar of Virginia State Papers, but a far larger number remain in manuscript, including vouchers for the smallest items of the original construction and subsequent changes. It will suffice at this point to signalize their existence and scope, leaving individual documents to be utilized where necessary in the historical summary to follow.

The same is true of the later evidences, of which the most important are a set of geometrical drawings signed "Alb. Lybrock, arch't and supt." and dated 1858. They comprise two parallel series, showing the building as it then existed, and as it would be if remodeled by the addition of one bay at the rear and by certain minor changes. Only the first series need interest us, especially as this remodeling was never carried out. The series includes plans of each floor, front and side elevations, and sections, all of which in almost every point where they can still be verified, are of the greatest accuracy.

[1] Travels through the United States of North America. London, 2nd edition, 1800. Vol. 3, p. 61.

[2] Travels through the States of North America and the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada during the years 1795-1796, and 1797. London, 1799. Vol. 1, pp. 189–190.

[1] Reise, vol. 1, p. 300.

[2] Richmond in Bygone Days, 1856, pp. 59–60.

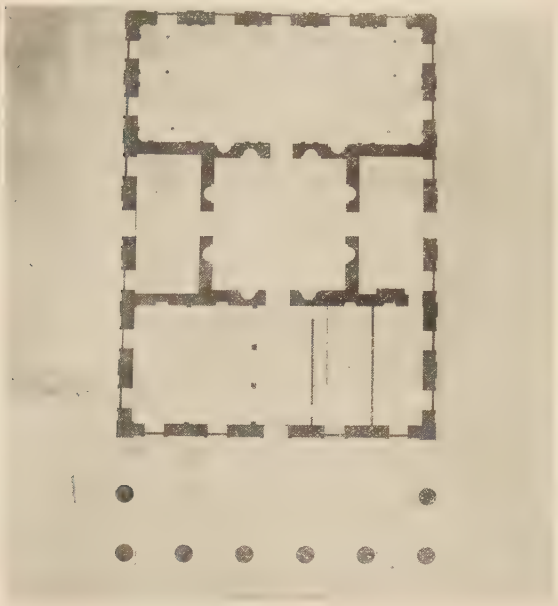

FIGURE 10

(Figs. 10–15.) Photographs taken before the remodeling of 1905 are an important supplementary source. (Figs. 16–19.) They give the best idea of the interior detail, and cover many points not shown by the drawings. What neither drawings and photographs can show, in many cases, are the materials of the different parts, and the evidences of changes prior to 1858 which lie concealed in various parts of the building.

The "Report of the Committee on the Englargement, Restoration and Repair of the Capitol Building,"[1] far from clearing up these points, as it might well have done, does not even give a summary of the alterations made in the old building in 1905. There is likewise no itemization of the large sums expended by the contract, which might indicate exactly what the changes were, though certain incidental mentions and items for extra work in the accounts reveal a few of them. To supplement the bareness of the legislative report, Messrs. Noland and Baskerville, the Richmond architects among those associated in charge of the remodeling, have kindly given the writer the benefit of their knowledge of the building before its transformation, and of their exceptional opportunities for observation during the reconstruction. In general their surveys and written memoranda made at the time, were not preserved, but their memory is clear on many points of interest.

[1] Senate Document No. III, Session of 1906.

B. General History of the Building.

Before the arrival of the plans of the Capitol from abroad, considerable progress, as we have seen, had already been made on the building. The corner-stone was laid August 18, 1785;[1] two months later the Directors had written: "The foundation of the capitol is laid, of the following dimensions, 148 by 118 feet . . ." Their further statement: "The present plan differs from the one transmitted you only in the arrangement" is obviously incorrect, as the draught sent to Jefferson shows

[1] Christian: Richmond, p. 27.

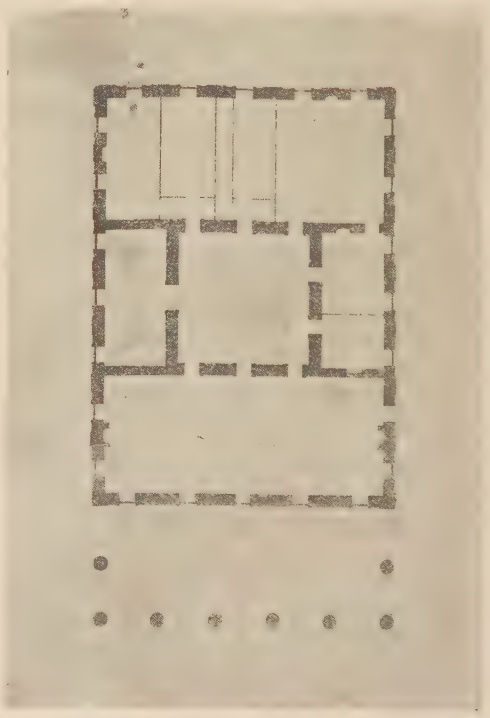

FIGURE 11

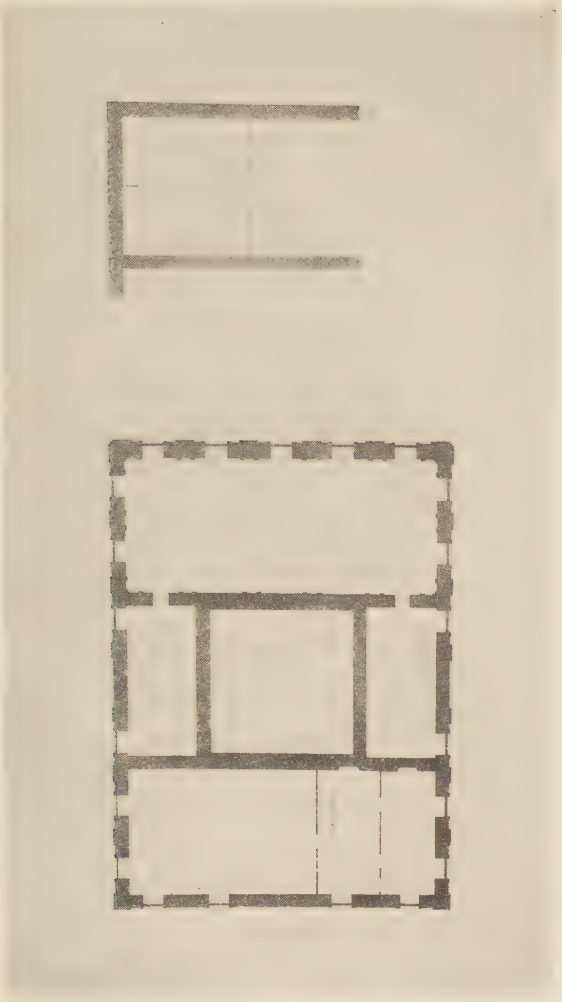

FIGURE 12

the body of the building about 120 by 96 feet, a discrepancy later admitted by them.

Jefferson's plan differed from both; he knew difficulty was bound to arise over its adoption, as his letters to Madison and Randolph have attested. He even wrote a second letter to Madison, of the same tenor as the one already quoted.[1] Madison replied to the first that it did not arrive till February 24, too late for legislative action with regard to the capitol. A letter from the Attorney-General, he goes on,

"takes notice of the plan you had promised and makes no doubt it will arrive in time for the purpose of the Commissioners. I do not gather from his expressions that he is aware of the change which will become necessary in the foundations already laid, a change which will not be submitted to without reluctance."[1]

[1] Feb. 8, 1786. Bergh, vol. 5, p. 282.

The outcome of the difficulty on the arrival of the plans, with the essential adoption of Jefferson's design, appears in the following letter, July 12, 1786, to Jefferson from Edmund Randolph, then one of the Directors:

" . . . your favor concerning the capitol came to hand; after the most painful anxiety at the tardy movement of the plan to Virginia. A council of Directors was immediately called, and with some difficulty the plan was carried thro'. But I am exceedingly afraid that we have committed some blunder even now. I directed Mr. Dobie, our superintendent, and an adept in draughtsmanship, to furnish me with a narrative of our proceedings in technical language. When completed, it shall be forwarded. At present, however, I will give you some imperfect idea of it. The plan sent to you was a mere assay: that adopted by us was very different. When your plan was examined, it was conceived, that without adhering precisely to the same front, (i. e. frontage) it would be enough to follow the same proportions. By this doctrine we were rescued from a great embarrassment. For the lowland interest and a strong party of the upland, in the Assembly, are laboring to stop the progress of the building. To pull up all that had been done would have been to strengthen the opposition. We have therefore resolved to pursue your plan in every respect, except the extension of the front. By this means we have been obliged to remove only one side wall and a few partition walls . . ."[2]

The arrival of the model, and its relation to the progress of the work are chronicled in a letter from William Hay to Jefferson, dated May 3, 1787:

"Your favour of the 26th of December inclosing Bill of Lading for the Model of the Capitol came safe to hand, addressed to Mr. Buchanan and myself, and have to apologize for answering it in my private capacity. There has not been a Meeting of the Directors of the Public Buildings for some considerable Time past and Mr. Buchanan is now confined by a severe spell of Sickness, so that I

[1] Writings of James Madison, edited by Gaillard Hunt, vol. 2, p. 224.

[2] Library of Congress, Jefferson Papers. Series 6, vol. 2, No. 95.

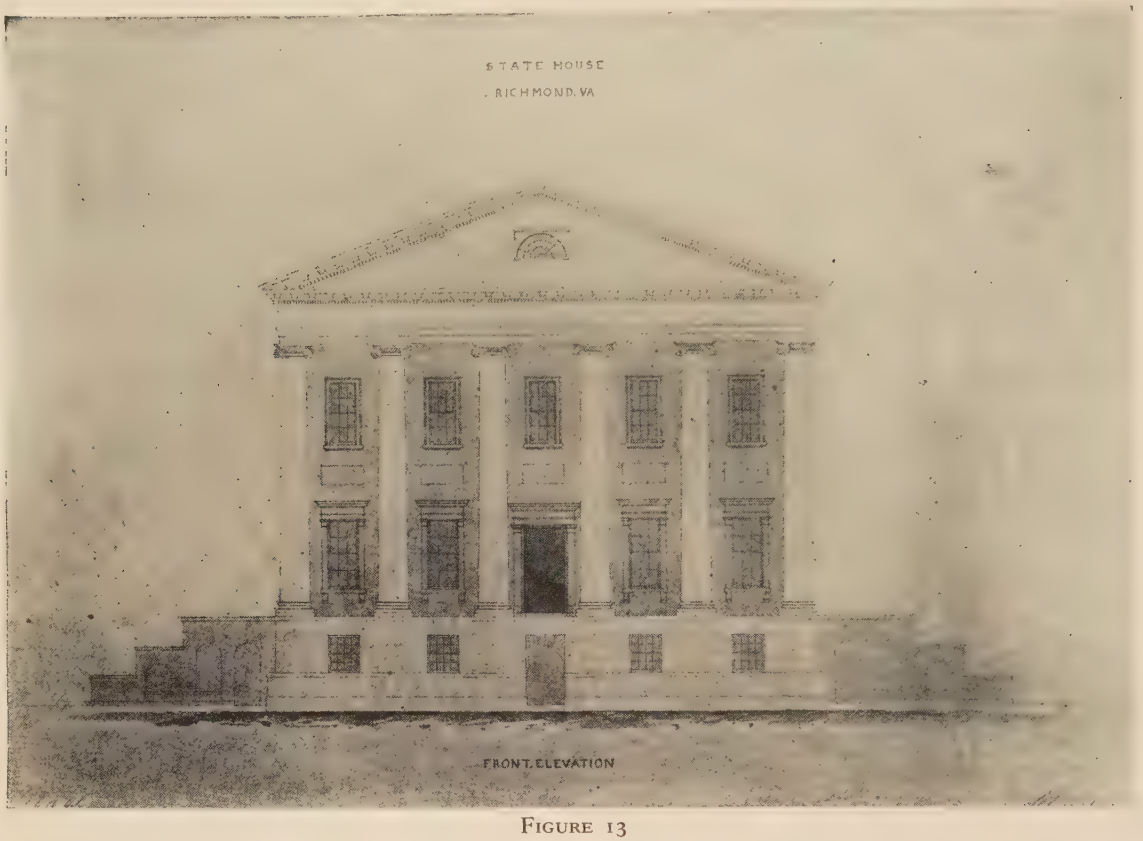

FIGURE 13

could have neither the Advice of the Directors nor the assistance of Mr. Buchanan in the business. No Delay in the work has been occasioned by the Models not coming to Hand, last Summer, and I fear it will stop where it is now for some Time. The Pedestal Basement and the principal Story were finished by last October, and nothing has been done since. The fund of the 2 p. c. Additional Duties upon which was charged £5000 to be applied towards completing the public Buildings, has proved unproductive, for the Treasurer assures me, it will not produce the sum which was charged on it in the first Instance for the support of the members of Congress. The Directors therefore can make no Contract upon this Fund without sacrificing too much to the extravagance of the Times, and when the Assembly meets again I fear no further Assistance will be given on Account of the Distress which is universally complained of through the State. The Capitol may then remain in its present state for many years. The Directors themselves have been neglectful, in many things, and in none more than in the want of Acknowledgements to you, for the great Assistance you have given them in this Business. Permit me therefore, to return my sincere thanks, and I am sure they will be those of the Directors in general, for the Interest you have taken in procuring proper Plans and a model for the Ornamenting of the Capitol of your native Country, and to assure you that I have the Honour to be with perfect Esteem, Sir, your most Obe. Hb. Ser."[1]

The further progress of the building may be traced indirectly through the great mass of accounts and vouchers preserved at Richmond. For our purposes only the most important, those marking the principal stages, or having references to changes from the design, need be cited. The "Report of a Committee to whom was referred the letter of the Directors of the public buildings, December 14, 1789," states:

"Samuel Dobie contracted with the Directors in February, 1787, to put a flat roof on the Capitol which should be tight and durable for £170, but

[1] Library of Congress, Jefferson Papers, 2d Series, vol. 41, No. 46.

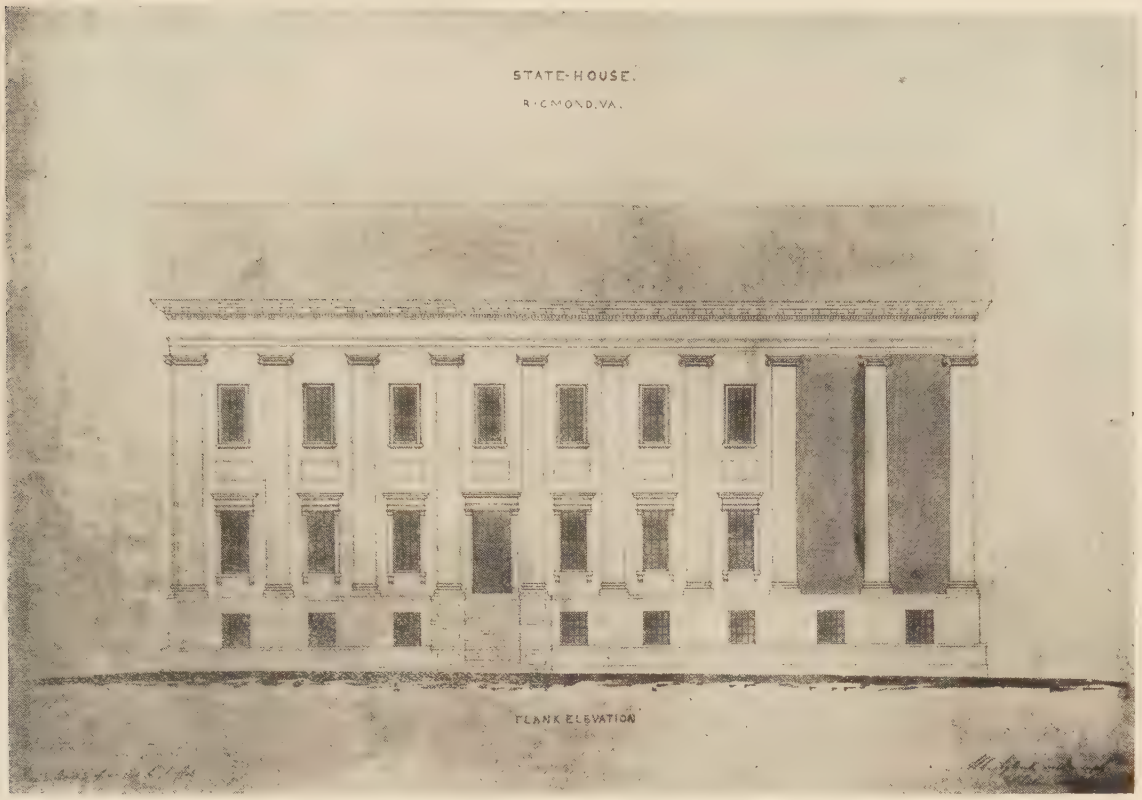

FIGURE 14

after much labor in honestly endeavoring to fulfil his contract, it was apprehended that it will be impossible to make the roof a tight one, and said Dobie is willing to make a reasonable compromise on account of said contract" . . . "that it is absolutely necessary for the preservation of the building from ruin there be a pedimont roof put on it to be covered with Lead."[1]

Warrants were authorized for payments on account of this pediment roof, April 13 and November 11, 1790.

The building of the portico is described in a letter from William Hay to Governor Beverly Randolph, June 22, 1790:

"Stating . . . that Edward Voss contracted with the Directors, on May 11, 1789, to build the columns of the Portico, and the vaults under the portico, of Brick . . . that the said columns were finished so late last season that the Directors postponed the vaults till this season. Upon application of Voss for permission to begin the vaults, the Directors excepted to the columns, as being . . . insufficient . . . As it would be unsafe to trust a Lead Cover on the roof of the Portico until the columns are made sufficient, they (the Directors) think that the roof should be shingled, and the front and sides of the pediment sheathed with plank to preserve the timbers from injury. . ."[1]

On Voss' failing to take down and re-erect the columns, they were finally allowed to stand as they were. On May 8, 1792, the Directors resolved:

"that Dabney Minor be directed to whitewash the pedestals upon the top of the Capitol, and the Pilasters, with Stone Lime, with a mixture of Lamp black to give it the appearance of stone," and on June 14 they wrote the Governor, "Mr. Minor will soon furnish the entablature."[2]

Not until 1797 was there an appropriation for completing the exterior, which had remained, meanwhile, as La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt saw it, without stucco or capitals. Then begins a series of payments, the last of which, marking the completion

[1] Calendar of Virginia State Papers, vol. 5, p. 77.

[1] Calendar of Virginia State Papers, vol. 5, pp. 174, 175.
[2] Calendar of Virginia State Papers, vol. 5, p. 593.

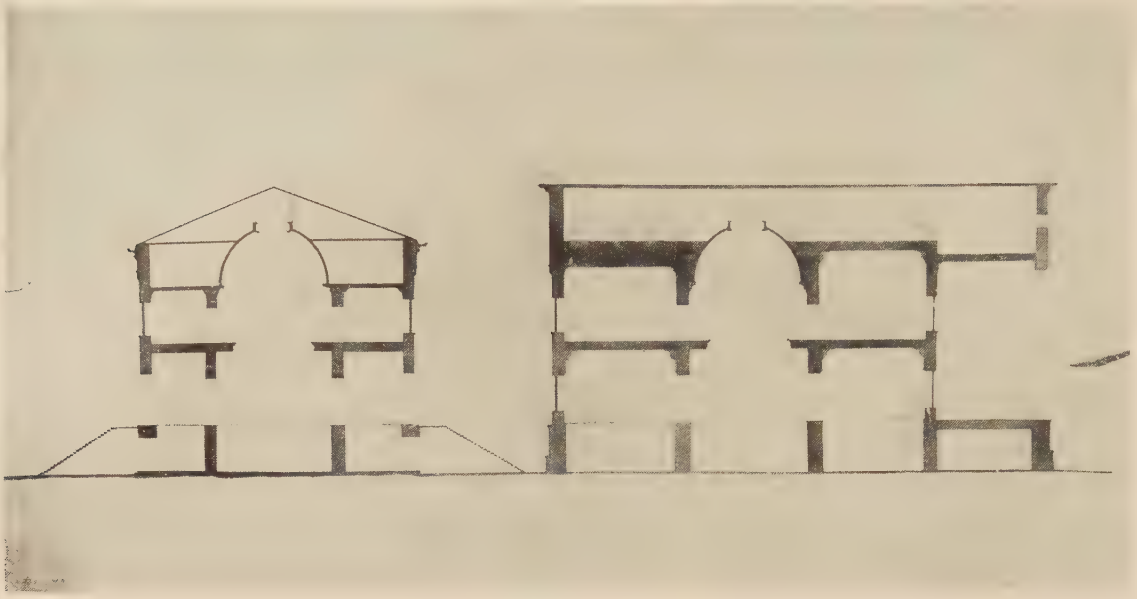

FIGURE 15

of the building, is attested by a letter to the Governor from William Fourshee, one of the Directors, October 23, 1798:

"Mr. Henry Robinson, the Undertaker to finish the outside of the Capitol, having nearly laid on all the coating, etc., I am also desired to request a warrant for one thousand dollars under the appropriation of the last General Assembly for that purpose."[1]

The later history of the building includes no important changes before the proposed enlargement in 1858. The only interesting modification recorded is the opening of the window in the pediment, for additional light in the garret, in 1801.[2] As the proposed for enlargement was not followed, the original fabric still remained substantially intact until 1870. On April 27 of that year occurred the catastrophe in which

"the gallery of the Supreme Court gave way and its main floor with it, into the House of Delegates below. The Supreme Court was sitting in the room on the North East corner of the third floor . . . Resolutions were offered to pull down the Capitol and build a new one, but it was finally decided to repair the old building."[3]

[1] Calendar of Virginia State Papers, vol. 8, p. 522.
[2] Calendar of Virginia State Papers, vol. 9, pp. 229, 235.
[3] Christian: Richmond, pp. 317–320.

As subsequent photographs show, by their agreement with the drawings of 1858, the architectural members of the House of Delegates were left as before.

On August 1, 1904, after prolonged agitation and discussion, the building was turned over to contractors for enlargement and remodeling, which was completed in the course of 1905. The architects entrusted with the work were Messrs. John Kevan Peebles, of Norfolk, Frye and Chesterman, of Lynchburg, and Noland and Baskerville, of Richmond.[1]

The scheme adopted by the legislature involved the building of separate wings of less height for the House and Senate, connected with the main block by corridors at the old side doors, and the cutting up of the old House and Senate Chambers for offices. A part of the original materials were replaced by new. In matters of form and detail, the architects, although they apparently ignored the plaster model, tried to revert to Roman forms and the proportions of the Maison Carrée in cases where these had been lost by the builders. The columns of the por-

[1] Report, pp. 2, 3.

FIGURE 16

tico were reinforced, and both capitals and bases were enlarged to correspond to the increased diameter, terra cotta capitals being substituted for the old capitals of the columns and pilasters. The architrave and the frieze were made of stone and the cornice of terra cotta. A marble floor was placed in the portico, and marble treads on the stairs. The niches of the rotunda were executed in marble instead of wood, and marble bases and wainscoting were introduced in the halls and rotunda. The belt courses at the basement sill line and the first floor line were made of stone instead of stucco.[1] Messrs. Noland and Baskerville state also that the columns were given entasis when the diameter was increased, that the pediment was lowered somewhat, and that the modillions were increased in size. These statements are confirmed by a comparison with earlier drawings and photographs.

[1] Report, passim.

C. The Building as Originally Completed.

We are now in a position to discount the various changes which have taken place since the erection of the building, and to determine how far it conformed, as first erected, to the original design. That it conformed in general is as certain as that it differed in many particulars. The use of the Ionic order, the number of bays on front and side, the main proportions, the principal divisions of the interior, and many details agreed with the model and with Jefferson's intentions. Rather than to specify further agreements minutely, it will be simpler to note the points of difference, which include besides greater size and certain variations in proportion, the changes in the exterior approaches and steps, the addition of pilasters to the walls of the cella, and the change in character of the door and window enframements.

That some differences should have crept

in through adaptation to foundations previously laid, through modifications of the program, carelessness or defects of workmanship, local practices in building, and lack of understanding of the ideas of Jefferson and Clérisseau, is but natural. Some of the stylistic changes, however, can be assigned to none of these causes; they are the expression of a different personality, which, like Jefferson and Clérisseau, was in some respects ahead of the time. This, as we shall see, can be no other than the Samuel Dobie, who has been mentioned by Edmund Randolph in 1786 as "our superintendent, an adept in draughtsmanship." In later times indeed he passed as the architect of the building, for there is no question that it is he who is meant when Mordecai speaks in his recollections of one "John Dobie . . . the architect of the Capitol."[1]

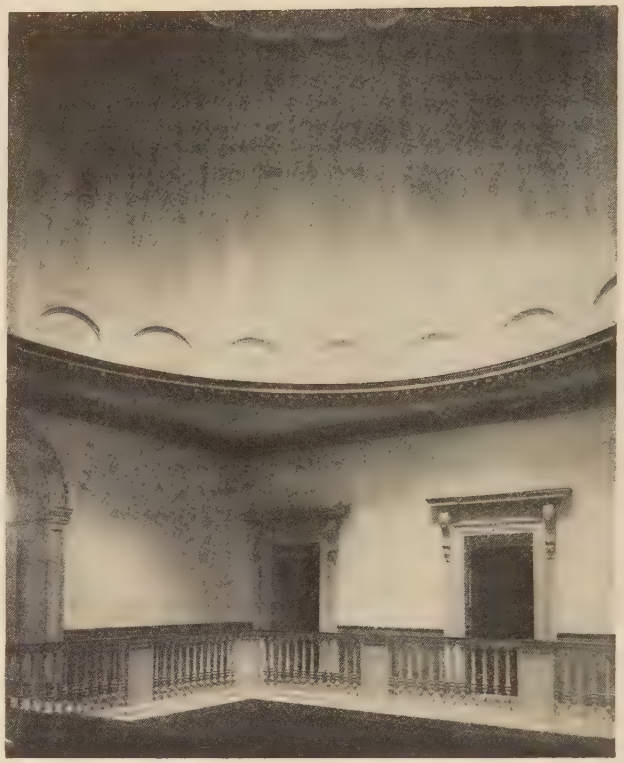

FIGURE 17

In a letter of William Hay to Governor Beverly Randolph, May 11, 1790,[2] Dobie is referred to as "Surveyor of Public Buildings," a title afterwards given by Jefferson to the architect of the Capitol in Washington. Although he was not employed by the Directors after 1794,[3] he was apparently still in Richmond in 1798 when Hay recommended him to inspect certain work under construction, "as the best judge I know of work of this kind."[4] Concerning his origin and training nothing is said, and inquiries of members of the Dobie family still in Virginia have not brought the desired information. We know, however, that he was already in the country as early as 1782,[5] and there seems no doubt that he came of a family which had been long in Virginia. A patent of land was issued to John Doby in 1683; the name of Dobie appears on marriage bonds of 1750 and 1761.[1]

Dobie submitted in the original competition for the National Capitol in 1791 a design which throws light on his architectural knowledge and powers. (Figs. 20–22.)[2] It exhibits a square general mass with four porticoes and a dome over a central rotunda. The suggestion is obviously from Palladio's Villa Rotunda, but the scale is much greater and the details are modified in an interesting way. Two of the porticoes are octastyle and the rotunda is large enough to have an interior colonnade. The exterior dome, however, instead of having the semi-circular form shown in Palladio's plate of the Villa, is of true Roman shape, and implies a familiarity with classical forms very unusual at that time in America. Dobie was evidently

[1] Richmond in Bygone Days, p. 87.
[2] Calendar of Virginia State Papers, vol. 5, p. 150.
[3] Ib. vol. 8, p. 316.
[4] Ib. vol. 8, p. 507.
[5] Ib. vol. 8, p. 317.

[1] Cf. William and Mary Quarterly, vol. 12, p. 105; vol. 20, p. 22; vol. 11, p. 270.
[2] Glenn Brown, History of the United States Capitol, 1900–1902, pls. 10–12.

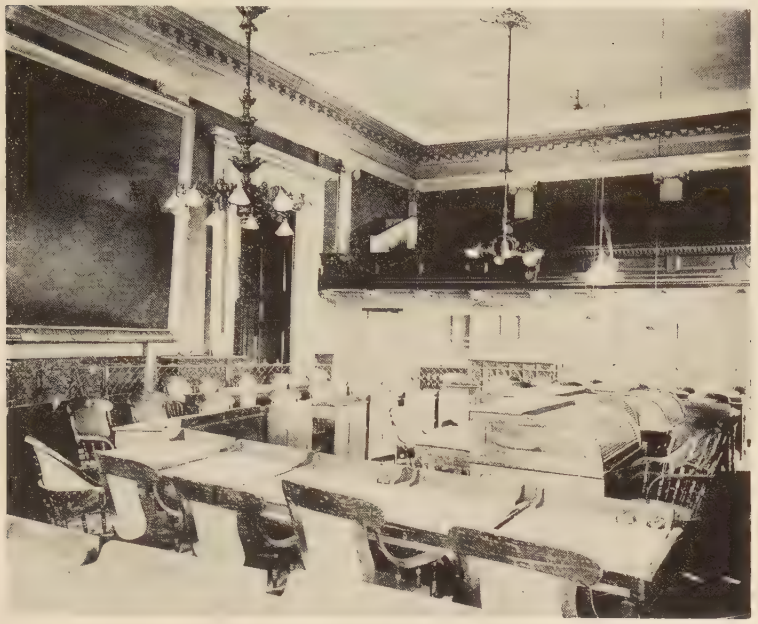

FIGURE 18

a man of some independent knowledge and training, whose influence on the building of the Virginia Capitol must be reckoned with.

Among the individual differences between the design of the Capitol and the execution, the greater size is readily explained by the necessity of conforming to the foundations already laid before the design arrived. As one would expect from Edmund Randolph's letter, the length of the building corresponds to the length of the foundations, the width is less than that of those foundations but proportional to the width of the model. The general increase thus necessitated was of approximately 10 per cent, and the dimensions of the plan conform to this percentage with a very small margin of error. The heights, however, both of the columns and of the entablature, are increased in greater ratio, about 14 per cent. (See Table.) This makes the columns about nine and a half diameters high instead of nine, and thus the change can scarcely have been made in an attempt to improve the proportions. It resulted more probably from increases in the interior heights, which lengthened the pilasters and forced a proportional increase in the entablature. The pediment was raised again to the Palladian ratio which Jefferson had originally used, 2:9, one of which occurs again in Dobie's design for the National Capitol.

In the interior, the end rooms were widened at the expense of the center, making the side windows unbalanced, the basilican colonnade in the court room was omitted, and the galleries of the House were rearranged. The colonnade in the central hall was crowded out, and the gallery above was supported on brackets, the stairs being again placed in the vestibule. The room next to the portico was also shortened, as the original cornice and pilasters in the photograph show (Fig. 15); while galleries were placed at both ends of the House of Delegates, with the Speaker's chair in the middle of the rear wall. The minor subdivisions of the upper floors may well have suffered modification before 1858. The uses of the rooms shown by the plans of 1858 differ in many respects from those assigned by Jefferson, notably in having the Senate opposite the House on the main floor, and the Court on the second floor. The library certainly did not occupy such extensive quarters at first. Whether the rooms originally followed Jefferson's assignments is not indicated by any document to which I have had access.

Another group of changes which presents no difficulty is the omission of the monumental flight of steps before the portico, and the substitution of single flights at right angles to the building for the pairs shown on the model. The object

FIGURE 19

was doubtless to get more light and more offices in the basement. It is apparently to the side steps that an item in Samuel Dobie's account with the State refers: "For drawings . . . and directing the workmen in the years 1793 and 1794 in building the stone steps and stairs . . ."[1] Before 1793 the plans had been sent away to Washington and it is not surprising that the new plan of the steps should not have conformed to them. By 1793, also, the building had already been long enough in use to demonstrate that it was the side entrances that the interior rendered important, and that the steps in front had only an esthetic function, which had to give way before practical needs. Mr. Baskerville remembers quite distinctly that when the exterior plaster was removed from the sides in 1905, marks of stairs running as in the model were found. As Dobie speaks of building the stone steps, there may well have been previous temporary ones of wood, having the form originally intended.

Another change traceable to Dobie is the addition of a parapet above the cornice —a feature not long preserved, but attested by papers of the Directors. As we have seen, Dabney Minor was directed in May 1792 to whitewash the pedestals on the top of the Capitol, and in June of the same year occurs an item "3 Tons of lead for covering the Pedestal Cornice,"[2] These statements can refer only to a parapet of pedestal form, such as Dobie showed later on his design for the Capitol at Washington.

The use of the Scamozzi Ionic capital on the exterior order, already mentioned, may likewise be assigned to him on similar grounds. They appear not only on the design for the National Capitol but in the interior finish of the building at Richmond, which was not shown in the drawings sent from abroad.

The most striking modification, and the one which most clearly evidences the intervention of some other agency than the ordinary craftsman of the day, is the addition of the pilasters at each bay along the sides and rear of the building. This was a step in the direction of closer following of the classic prototype, as well as of Palladian architecture in the grand manner, which we can attribute to Dobie. The pilasters belong certainly to the original construction; they are mentioned in the vouchers in 1792, were seen by La Rochefoucauld and Latrobe, and are stated by Messrs. Noland and Baskerville to be bonded into the walls. It is interesting to note that Dobie's design for the Capitol at Washington has a pilaster treatment exactly similar even to the capitals. It might be urged that it is more likely that Dobie derived this idea from the Virginia Capitol, but as there is not a vestige of

[1] Calendar of Virginia State Papers, vol. 8, p. 319.
[2] Calendar of Virginia State Papers, vol. 5, p. 594.

evidence that the pilasters were ever included in the original design, and there is ample proof that Dobie had an independent knowledge of classic forms and a preference for them, it must be concluded that they were due to him in both cases.

One other stylistic change attracts attention, the substitution, for the Louis XVI doors and windows of the model, of enframements having an indefinably Greek flavor. These formed part of the work of finishing the exterior in 1797–8, at the time the stucco was laid on. At that date Dobie was no longer in the employ of the Directors; his detail for the Washington Capitol design, moreover, has nothing of this Greek touch. It may not be a coincidence that there was in Richmond in the employ of the Directors at that very moment the first representative of the Greek Revival to come to America, Benjamin Henry Latrobe. A man who had refused the post of Surveyor General to the Crown, he was well versed in Greek forms, as his design for the *corps de garde* of the United States Capitol, 1807, makes clear.[1] His first important commission in this country was the design of the Virginia Penitentiary at Richmond, on which he was employed during 1797 and 1798. With the original drawings of the Capitol lacking, nothing could have been more natural than that the authorities should have applied to the best qualified person at hand for a design for the missing details.

To complete our study of the executed building it remains only to examine those points not covered by the original drawings and the model, which, in the absence of sections, the builders were forced to decide for themselves. Most important of these was the method of covering the central hall. A dome was adopted, accommodated to the square room by flat triangular soffits, naively unstructural but not unsatisfactory (Fig. 17). The surface of the dome itself is decorated with segmental gores, which recur in Dobie's Washington Capitol. The interior detail for the most part presents nothing unexpected in late Colonial woodwork. The Doric and Ionic orders of the House and Senate Chambers (Figs. 18, 19) are of the stereotyped Palladian form, with no trace of Adam influence, and few of the ordinary native adaptations to the material. Only in the consoles of the doorways in the central hall is there evidence of the more direct classical influence sometimes appearing elsewhere in Dobie's work.

A curious evidence, to which there is now no danger of attaching too much significance, is offered by the railing about the rotunda opening. When the paint was removed from this at the time of the remodeling, there was found, according to Mr. Baskerville, the name "Thomas Jefferson," very neatly carved, as if by a workman. In the absence of any other obvious motive for this, it is scarcely too hazardous to assume that it was a testimony to the common knowledge of Jefferson's part in the design.

The materials used in the building did not conform entirely to Jefferson's informal suggestions in his letter of August 13, 1785, but that was hardly to be expected. He had proposed that the columns and external architraves should be of stone, the external cornice of wood, and the interior cornices and trim of plaster. As constructed, the columns were of brick, and according to Messrs. Noland and Baskerville, hollow like a well-curb. The main entablature was all of wood, the enframements of the openings were modeled in the stucco, and the interior orders were of wood.

Considering the executed building as a whole, it is evident that much had been lost from the original design with very little compensating gain. The proportions of the columns were greatly injured by the increase in relative height, the relation between the rooms and the fenestration

[1] Brown: U. S. Capitol, vol. 1, pl. 44.

suffered, the majestical columnar subdivision of the interior was abandoned without securing the delicate charm of typically colonial woodwork. The scale, to be sure, was further increased, the pilasters tended to restore the unity of cella and portico, the Greek doors and windows were more in advance of stylistic fashion, but the elegance and consistency of the original design were lost. In their pre-destined attempt to reach the classic ideal set them, Dobie and his comrades failed to strike fairly either their own goal or the less ambitious mark of the humbler craftsmen. So far as the building succeeded, it was due to the underlying qualities with which Jefferson had endowed it at the first, which make the building itself as truly his as the finished design. The use of the simple and crystalline temple form, the colossal order, the monumental disposition of the interior—the chief remains of his ideas—are what give the building its novel dignity, its expressiveness of the majesty of the new and sovereign republican state.

IV. Influence of the Design

In the colonies during the Revolution, building came practically to a standstill. In the chronology of American buildings given in "The Georgian Period," a few dwelling houses only are listed during the years 1775–83, against a rich assemblage of important buildings during the decades before and after.[1] In the table in Mr. Aymar Embury's "Early American Churches,"[2] not a single building appears between the years 1775 and 1787, although nine buildings each fall in the twelve-year periods before and after these dates. Although these tables are not without errors, the condition which they indicate is too patent to be mistakable.

[1] The Georgian Period, being measured drawings of Colonial Work, 1898–1902, Vol. 1, p. i; Vol. 3, p. i.

[2] 1914, pp. 186, 187.

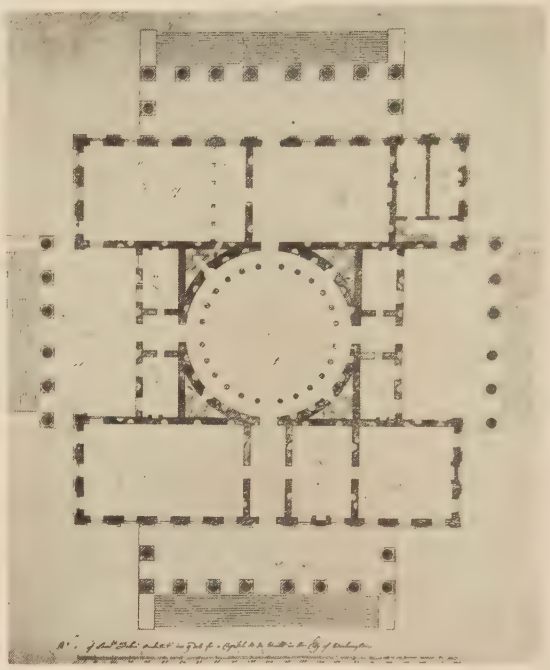

FIGURE 20. PLAN OF SAMUEL DOBIE'S COMPETITIVE DESIGN FOR THE CAPITOL AT WASHINGTON

Few civil buildings prior to the Revolution surpassed the old State House in Philadelphia, or the State House at Annapolis, which well represent the prevailing style. In the planning of the interiors there was evident a primitiveness of analysis which would have been serious had the requirements been more complex. Architectural treatment of the exterior was generally confined to the openings, cornice, and cupola, sometimes with quoins at the angles. The portico appears in but few instances, notably in the Redwood Library at Newport, although porticoes, even extended through two stories, were already beginning to appear on the more ambitious churches and residences. These porticoes were invariably less in width than the building, so that they have at most an academic, not a classical aspect. Exceptional buildings only—Christ Church in Philadelphia, the two churches at Charleston, the old Charleston Exchange, and Faneuil Hall in Boston,—showed any attempt to give an architectonic member-

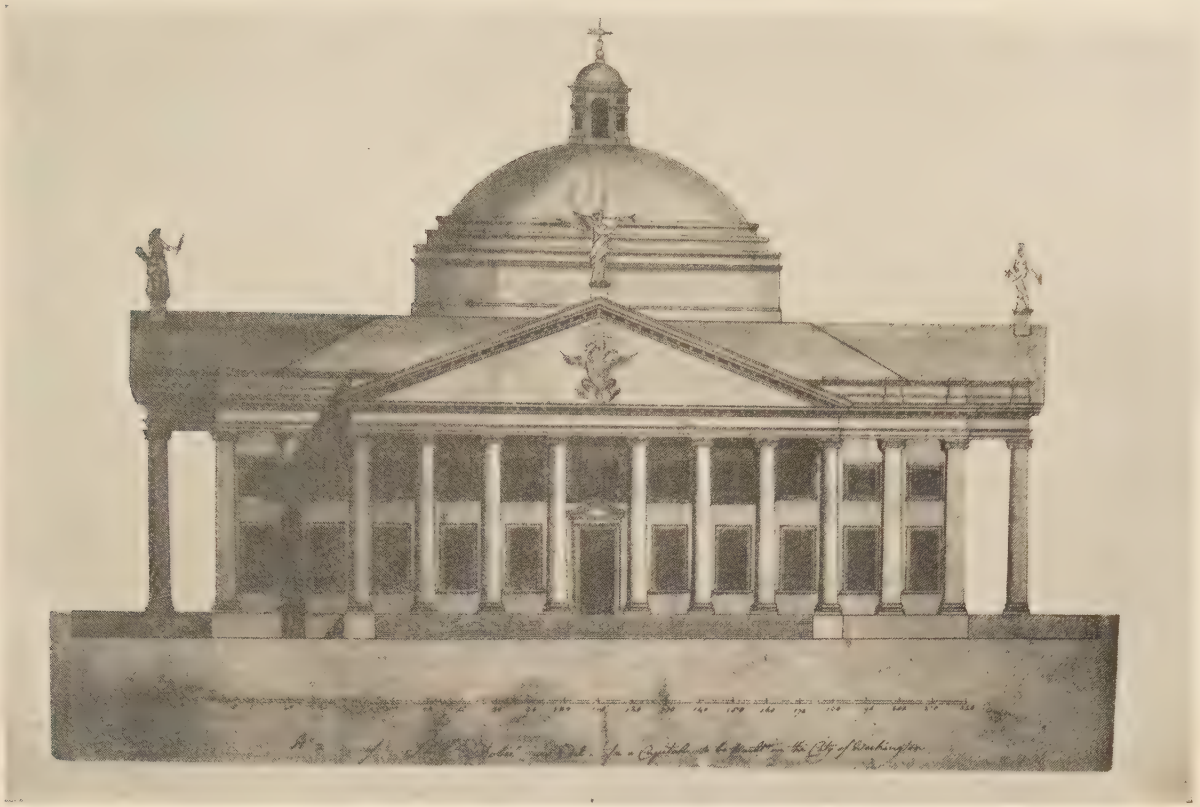

FIGURE 21. DOBIE'S COMPETITIVE DESIGN FOR THE CAPITOL AT WASHINGTON

ing to the wall surfaces, or to unite them with the portico by a pilaster treatment. Although in all these points they may have been unconsciously superior in frankness of expression, they were, none the less, backward in relation to the stylistic movements in Europe which furnished their received ideals. Foreign taste and foreign architecture had themselves undergone a transformation in the second half of the eighteenth century — a transformation which German scholars have rightly characterized as a second Renaissance.[1] The discovery of the buried cities, the engravings and writings of Piranesi, the publication of the Greek monuments, had opened an era of classical building, in which the Adams in England, Soufflot in France, had already created new standards.

[1] O. Benndorf: Über die jüngsten geschichtlichen Wirkungen der Antike, Wien, 1885.

A. Schöne: Über die beiden Renaissance-bewegungen des 15 und 18 Jahrhunderts, Kiel, 1903.

The character of the colonial buildings no longer satisfied the founders of the independent states of America and the new national government. Although the traditional method of buildings was resumed in churches and ordinary domestic buildings with scarcely a change, a new feeling for largeness of scale and architectonic quality began to manifest itself in public and semi-public buildings. The buildings successively prepared for Congress and for the President at New York, Philadelphia, and Washington evidenced this in varying measures. Federal Hall in New York, remodeled by L'Enfant in 1789, with its portico and high basement, had a new and studied elegance.[1] The Government House, in New York, built for Washington, 1789–91, surpassed the private residences of the day by its size

[1] *Columbian Magazine*, 1789, p. 504; J. Winsor; Narrative and Critical History of America, Vol. 7, 1888, p. 331.

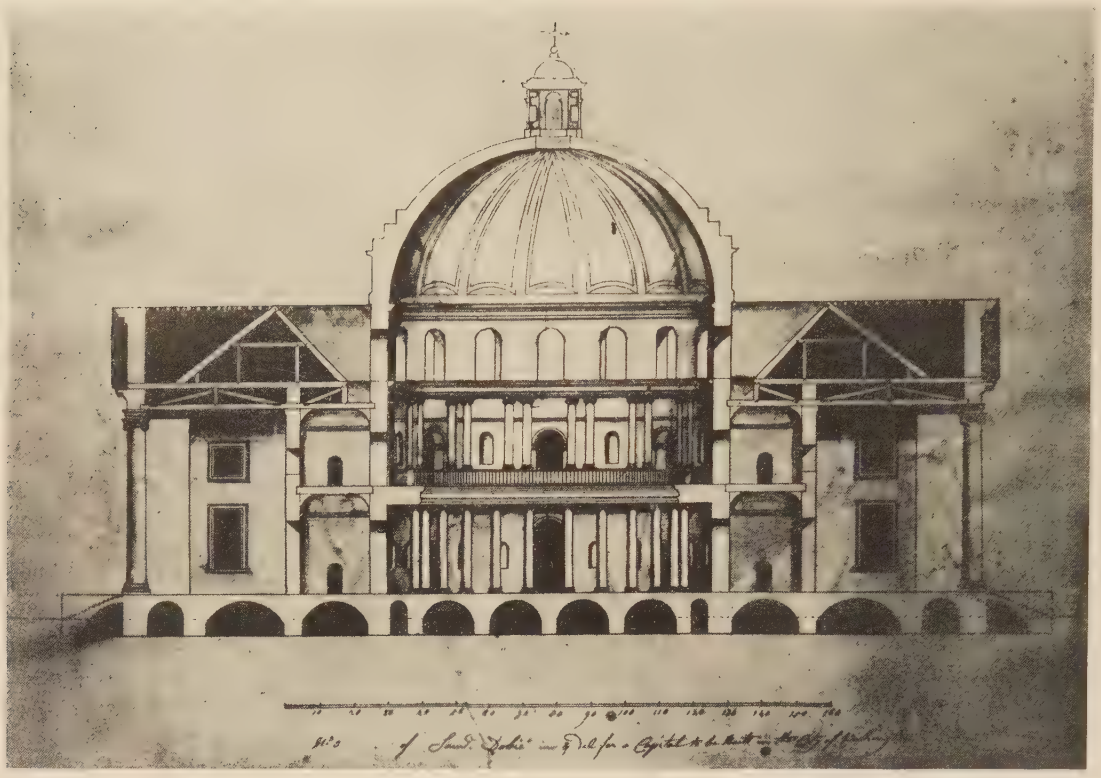

FIGURE 22. DOBIE'S COMPETITIVE DESIGN FOR THE CAPITOL AT WASHINGTON

as well as by its tall pedimented portico.[1] The Congress Hall in Philadelphia, built for another purpose, was confessedly inadequate, but the house built by the State for the President, 1793–97, though still Colonial in its detail, was of a scale and magnificence hitherto unapproached.[2] For the buildings at Washington a determined attempt was made, under Jefferson's leadership,[3] to secure designs which should be worthy of a great nation and conform to the best architectural taste of Europe. The individual states were not backward in this movement. The new state house of South Carolina, designed by Hoban and erected after 1786, had a heavy tetrastyle portico in the Tuscan order (Fig. 23);[4] the State House in Boston, built in 1795–8 on a liberal scale, showed a mixture of colonial and classic forms. Of many of these buildings no plans are preserved. The plans of the national Capitol, however, and, in a less degree, the Massachusetts State House, show a monumentality and logic immeasurably superior to the naiveté of the earlier designs.

Before all these in date stands Jefferson's Virginia Capitol, which anticipates their qualities of monumental planning and external treatment, and outdoes them in its prophetic announcement of the return of the antique. Virginia preceded the other states as well as the nation in providing new quarters for its administration; its capitol was the first building to be destined specifically for a modern republican government, and the first to give such a

[1] Cuts in *N. Y. Magazine*, 1795, front., and in *Magazine of American History*, vol. 16, 1886, p. 222.

[2] Engraving by George Strickland, 1828, kindly furnished me by Mr. T. W. Jordan, of the Pennsylvania Historical Society.

[3] Cf. his letter to L'Enfant, April 10, 1791. Bergh, Vol. 8, p. 162.

[4] Destroyed in 1865. Reproduction of Richardson's pen drawing from "Columbia, South Carolina, 1786–1913," facing p. 25, kindly called to my attention by Mr. A. S. Salley, State Archivist.

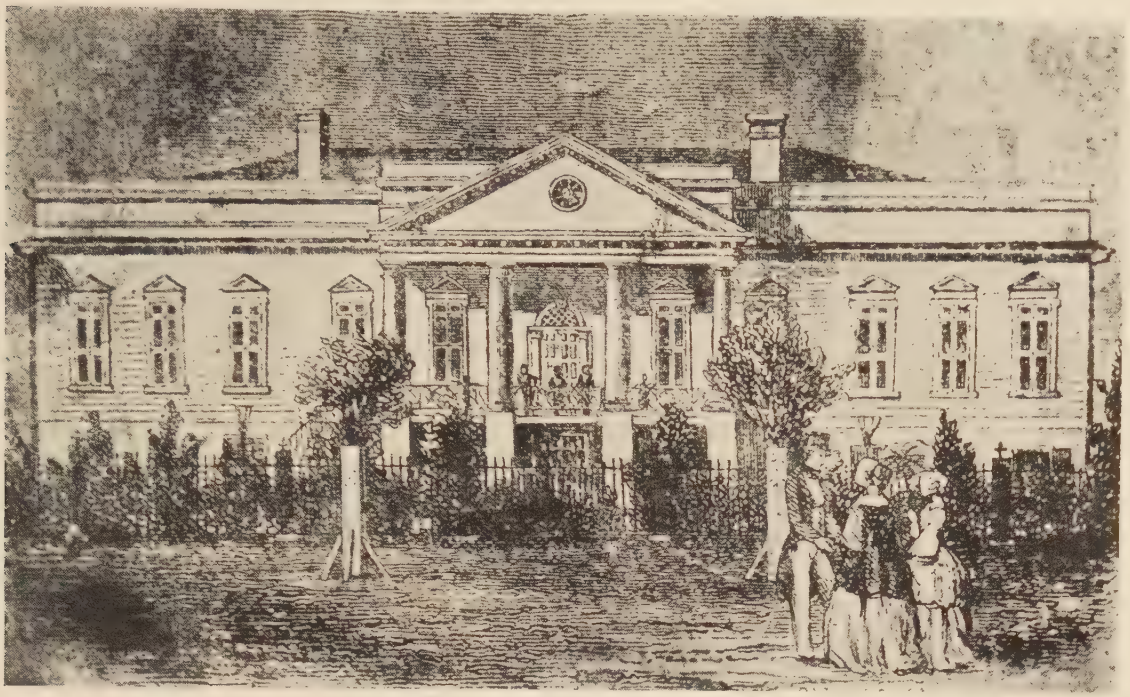

FIGURE 23. HOBAN'S DESIGN FOR THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE HOUSE

government a monumental setting.[1] The uniting of legislative, judicial and executive departments under one roof, in a conscious attempt to secure greater magnificence, became a universal precedent in America, occasioning many difficulties in later days of more elaborate requirements. Although the combination was not of Jefferson's making, he accepted it, and sought to give clear distinction to the various parts within the plan by logical analysis and balance of coördinate branches, thus establishing the principle, though not necessarily the formula, for later solutions. The external forms were not less novel. The hexastyle portico was not only unapproached in scale, but bore a new relation to the building, united with it by a single unbroken entablature. The temple form, with its unrivaled abstract unity blinding observers to faults of relation, here made its first appearance in America.

Innovations so striking could not be wholly without the effect which Jefferson so much desired. The testimony of contemporaries, already cited, makes it clear that, in spite of inadequacies of execution, the building was considered very notable. More concrete effects were also not lacking. Within the pervasive movement of which it was the leader, it is easy to point to specific instances in which it exercised a direct influence.

The first of these appears during the preliminary studies for the national Capitol. It has already been mentioned that Clérisseau's drawings were sent to L'Enfant to serve as references in the designing of the Federal buildings with which he was then charged. Jefferson wrote after L'Enfant's dismissal "Major L'Enfant had no plans prepared for the Capitol or Government House. He said he had them in his head. I do not believe he will produce them for concurrence . . ."[1] In consequence a competition was instituted,

[1] Neither in Switzerland nor in Holland does the republican form of government seem to have given rise to special types of buildings before the nineteenth century.

[1] Letter to Messrs. Stuart, Johnson & Carroll, Mar. 8, 1792. Bergh, vol. 19, p. 88.

the program of which, revised by Jefferson, itself bears striking evidence of the establishment of precedents by the Virginia Capitol.[1] The drawings at first sent in were unsatisfactory, others were invited; finally, the plan of Dr. Thornton was selected, Stephen Hallet was given second place and engaged to supervise the execution. Among the studies which Hallet made, one is still preserved which has a *parti* strikingly similar to that adopted by Jefferson for the Capitol at Richmond (Fig. 24).[2] Like that, it has the form of a temple, but has a free standing portico all about. With its octastyle front and fourteen columns on the side it surpassed Jefferson's design in scale, though its interior arrangements fall behind those of his.

The impression made by such a design is shown by letters concerning Hallet's competitive drawing, with which this design can be identified.[3] The Commissioners wrote Hallet on the receipt of his plan: "The Stile of Architecture of yours has attracted, the Distribution of Parts, is not thought sufficiently convenient." Washington wrote the Commissioners "Could such a plan as Judge Turner's be surrounded with Columns, and a colonade like that which was presented to you by Monsr. Hallet (the roof of Hallet's, I confess does not hit my taste) . . . it would, in my judgement, be a noble and desirable structure."[4] Letters preserved at the Department of State make it clear that the suggestion of a temple form came to Hallet from Jefferson, to whom he had previously shown a design of a different character.[5]

Jefferson did not insist on the temple form, merely demanding that the accepted

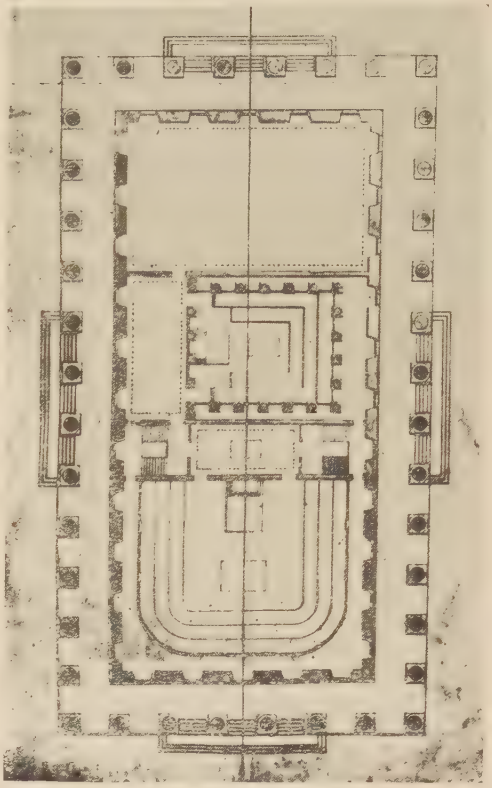

FIGURE 24

design should be classical, and cordially recommended Dr. Thornton's plan with wings and a central rotunda—doubtless as being a model of "spherical architecture"! It was this form, rather than the "cubical," which, with the prestige of its adoption in the national Capitol, became the accepted form for state capitols down to our own day.

Its victory was not without a struggle, which was rendered more severe in consequence of a certain lack of relation to the use of the building which became evident with time. The rotunda of the National Capitol like the central hall at Richmond, was originally intended as a room for conference for both houses but, unlike the hall at Richmond, it had an external expression out of all proportion to the use which it proved to receive. In the long years before the Rotunda was completed, indeed, the intended use was lost sight of, and to

[1] Brown, U. S. Capitol, Vol. 1, p. 5.

[2] Ib., Vol. 1, pl. 18.

[3] The sequence and relationships of Hallet's designs is to be fully treated in a forthcoming study by Mr. Wells Bennett, who kindly enables me to utilize his conclusions.

[4] Documentary History of the United States Capitol, 1904, p. 18.

[5] Cf. especially Hallet's letter to Jefferson, Sept. 21, 1792. District of Columbia Papers, Vol. 1.

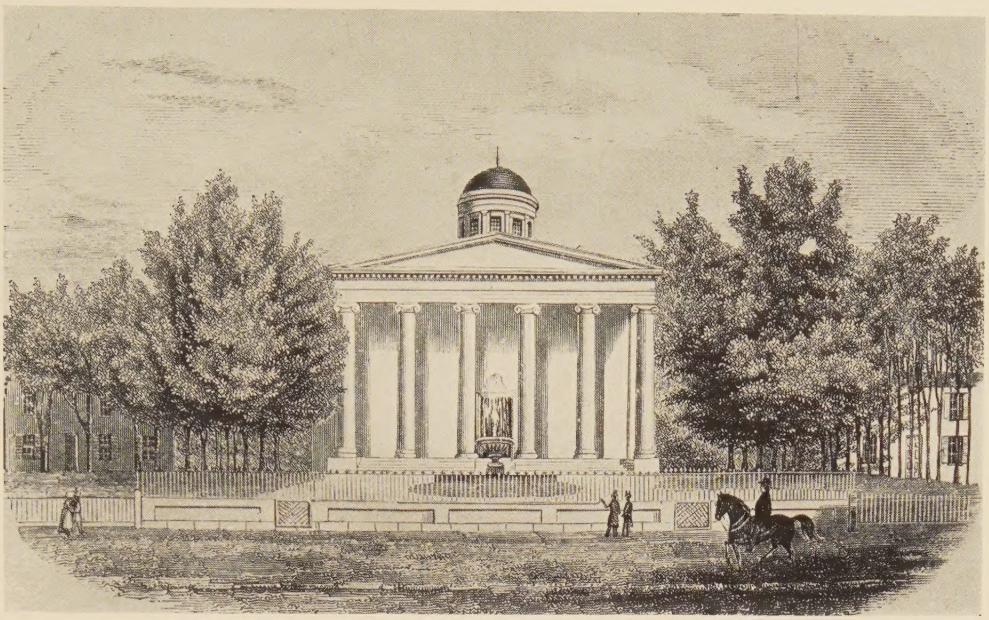

FIGURE 25. THE THIRD CAPITOL OF KENTUCKY, 1827–31

this day the conference of both houses is held in the Hall of Representatives. There exists thus a lack of practical function in the Rotunda, which the monumental expressiveness of the great dome has not prevented foreign architects from remarking. For commonwealths of the limited means of the States just after the Revolution the Washington plan had the drawback of greater size, complexity, and expense.

From whatever causes, a number of the earlier state capitols followed the temple form by preference, and in some of these, at least, a direct influence from the Virginia Capitol can be traced. The Capitol of Kentucky erected at Frankfort, 1827–31, was an Ionic temple having, like the one at Richmond, a hexastyle portico in front only (Fig. 25).[1] Later date and greater means resulted in a Greek character in the order and an execution entirely in marble; an incongruous addition was the small domed lantern over the stairway. Although there had been two previous capitols of less ambitious form, built about 1794 and 1816, the intimate relations of Kentucky with her parent state, together with the close correspondence of the forms, leaves little doubt that it was a case of germination deferred until the soil was prepared.

In the same series belongs the Capitol of Tennessee, built from the designs of William Strickland about 1850, and still intact.[1] This was a rationalization of the temple type, similar in general scheme to Jefferson's rejected studies with the porticoes at both ends. Here these porticoes are eight columns wide and one deep, and there are two other porticoes of six columns to mark the entrances on the sides. The Ionic order is again employed, but over a full basement story instead of a podium. A reminiscence of the colonial scheme with its cupola appears in the tower over the center, crowned with the inevitable Monument of Lysicrates. The relation of interior and exterior, the expression of the plan is much superior to that of Jefferson's design, in just the measure that the adherence to the classical type is less strict.

With this design we reach a point where the influence of Jefferson may be thought subordinate to other forces, yet it will be

[1] L. Collins, History of Kentucky, Enl. ed. 1882, p. 248.

[1] Frequently published, e. g. by E. Leslie Gilliams: A Pioneer American Architect. *Architectural Record*, v. 23, 1908, p. 135.

found that even these forces may be traced in part to him. Strickland had been a pupil of Latrobe, and had completed Latrobe's design for the second United States Bank in Philadelphia, a prostyle version of the Parthenon, in 1824. Latrobe was an Englishman of the highest professional training, received in the office of S. P. Cockerell, the father of the archæologist; he was the first to employ Greek forms in America.[1] It might well be thought that the use of the temple type by him and his pupils was independent of Jefferson's example. An examination of the revivalist architecture of England, however, gives no encouragement for such a view. Although individual Greek forms began to appear as early as 1760, the temple seems not to have been imitated in its entirety in any monumental construction until after 1830.[2] Even then there was but a single important building of temple form actually executed, the Birmingham Town Hall, 1831–5[3] It would seem then that Latrobe got his encouragement to literal imitation elsewhere, nowhere else than from the Virginia Capitol.

It was to the statesmen and rulers, like Jefferson, Napoleon, Catherine II, and Ludwig I, rather than to the professional architects, that the direct imitation of classical models made its appeal,—the Virginia Capitol and the Madeleine are parallel instances of their creation. Whereas in France, however, the fidelity of academic architects to functional requirements left the copy isolated, in America, without this restraint, it was multiplied as nowhere else. The sophmoric analogy of the young republic with Rome was on the lips of everyone. Encouraged by Jefferson's example the builders adopted the temple form not only for government buildings but even for dwellings. The old State House at Hartford,[1] and the Sub-Treasury in New York, both designed by Ithiel Towne, are among the chief of the buildings which may be traced thus indirectly to the Virginia Capitol.

Aside from stimulating the literal imitation of the temple forms, the building must have given a powerful impulse to more classical treatment generally—above all to the adoption of porticoes of the full height of buildings. Dobie's design for the National Capitol shows an early use of such a portico, which soon became almost universal for public buildings, and, in Virginia at least, for private residences as well. For these last, to be sure, Jefferson gave more direct models in his designs for the rebuilding of Monticello, for Farmington, and other houses; yet these were not only later in date but far less conspicuous than the Capitol of the State. Its portico dominated the architecture of Virginia.

Directly or indirectly, American classicism traces its ancestry to Jefferson's Capitol at Richmond. Though it was inevitable that the pervasive classical movement should ultimately reach America, the direction it would take was uncertain. Jefferson, who provided the means of introduction, turned it in a definite channel. At his first opportunity to design a monumental building, he broke with his earlier Palladian tendencies in a way which proved decisive for American architecture. Though impressions of Europe had doubtless accentuated his native classical leaning, the fundamental character of the design is not to be ascribed to French influence. Jefferson's provincial insistence on the support of classic authority anticipated by twenty years the attempt of Napoleon to gain the same sanction for his own Empire. Not merely in America, but in the development of modern classic architecture as a whole, the Virginia Capitol is a landmark of the first importance.

[1] In his design for the *corps de garde* of the National Capitol, 1807. Brown: U. S. Capitol, pl. 44.

[2] A. E. Richardson, Monumental Classic Architecture in Great Britain and Ireland, 1914, passim.

[3] *The Architectural Magazine*, . . . conducted by J. C. Loudon, v. II, 1835, pp. 16–27, 237–239.

[1] Demolished 1887, Cf. *The Connecticut Quarterly*, v. I, p. 320.